



POLITICAL



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OF

MODERN INDIA

23 DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD



EDITED BY
VERINDER GROVER

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Volume Twenty-Three

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By conviction and temperament Rajen Babu is essentially a man of peace and conciliation. The world today is almost a mad house with hate and fear sweeping over it. We see only the sins of our enemies and fail to reflect on our own limitations. We over-simplify the human situation reducing it to a conflict of right *vs.* wrong. Life is not so simple as all that. We need a deeper analysis of the situation, a comprehensive perspective which will embrace the partial visions of the conflicting sides. Rajen Babu's whole outlook is one of comprehension and not negation. He is truthful, self-critical and modest. If in our country, as in the world, we are not to spoil the hopes of future by the hatreds of the past, we require a discipline of the spirit and imaginative sympathy which are embodied in Rajen Babu's life and work.

February 2, 1952. —S. RADHAKRISHNAN
Madras

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PART II

PREFACE

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was an eminent freedom fighter, a renowned jurist, an eloquent parliamentarian, an administrator of proven ability, an able statesman and above all, a humanitarian *par excellence*. As the President of the Constituent Assembly and subsequently as the President of the Indian Republic for two terms, he played an important role in shaping the destiny of the nation. Rajendra Prasad's rise from a simple rustic to an acknowledged leader of the Congress was not a little achievement. It was the result of leading a life full of dedication and great personal sacrifice.

Rajendra Prasad was born in a remote village in Saran district of Bihar on 3 December 1884. His parents, Mahadev Sahay and Kamleshwari Devi, led a simple, pure and dedicated life. Rajendra Prasad received his early education from a village *Maulvi*. Subsequently, he was sent to a High School in Chhapra district from where he also passed the Entrance Examination of Calcutta University. In this examination Rajendra Prasad topped the list. After passing the Entrance Examination, Rajendra Prasad joined Presidency College, Calcutta. Even as a student he displayed deep patriotic instincts and was elected Secretary of the College Union. He passed his B.A. and M.A. examinations with distinction and then joined law. After completing his law studies, Rajendra Prasad started his practice in Calcutta in 1911. In 1916, with the setting up of the Patna High Court, he shifted to Patna which marked a turning point in his life.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi in 1917 when the latter organised Champaran satyagraha to liberate the peasants from the exploitation of the British indigo planters. The Champaran satyagraha not only brought Rajendra Prasad closer to Mahatma Gandhi but also changed the entire course of his life. Since then there was no looking back and

Rajendra Prasad started taking active part in various capacities, in the freedom struggle under the flag of the Indian National Congress.

In 1946, Rajendra Prasad served as the Minister for Food and Agriculture in the interim government and later in the same year he was elected President of the Constituent Assembly. On 24 January, 1950, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected President of India and again in 1957 he was elected President for the second term. In 1962, he relinquished the office of the President and shifted to Sadaqat Ashram in Patna. He expired on 28 February, 1963, leaving behind nothing but lofty ideas and ideals which the Indians will always cherish.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I consists of selected speeches and writings of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Part II consists of articles assessing his contribution.

This book is a systematic piecing together of articles contributed by scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute. I owe special thanks to *Young India, Harijan, Indian Express, Political Science Review, Janata, Indian Journal of Political Science, Reports of the Congress Sessions, 1926-34, The Searchlight, The Indian Nation, The Hindustan Review* and *The Indian Annual Register* from which I have drawn freely. I express my deep sense of appreciation to all contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their co-operation to me.

New Delhi

VERINDER GROVER

CHRONOLOGY

Chronology of significant events in the political life of Rajendra Prasad, 1884-1947.

3rd December 1884 : Born at village Zeradei in Dist. Saran (now Dist. Siwan), Bihar (F—Mahadev Sahay, M—Kamleshwari Devi).

June 1896 : Married Raj Bansi Devi.

1902 : Topped the Entrance Examination of the University of Calcutta—got scholarships, joined T.K. Ghosh Academy, Patna.
Member of Dawn Society at Calcutta.

1904 : Stood first in F.A. Examination, was awarded scholarships including Duff scholarship for having stood first in language.
Started a Bihari Club at Calcutta.
Was elected Secretary of the Presidency College Union, Calcutta.

1906 : Topped the list of successful candidates in B.A., Calcutta University.
Was awarded scholarships.
Participated in Bihari Students' Conference held at Patna, Bihar.
Served as a volunteer in the annual session of Indian National Congress held in Calcutta.

1907 : Passed M.A. in English from University of Calcutta.

July 1908 : Joined G.B.B (Now L.S.) College Muzaffarpur, Bihar, for 10 months.

January 1909 : Principal of G.B.B. (now L.S.) College Muzaffarpur.

March 1909 : Went to Calcutta for study of Law.

July 1909 : Became Professor of Economics in City College, Calcutta and remained there for two years.

1910 : Passed Bachelor of Law from University of Calcutta.
G.K. Gokhale asked Rajendra Prasad to join the Servants of India Society but could not join due to family problems. This made a deep impact on his future career.

1911 : Started his practice in Calcutta High Court; remained in the profession for two years.

1911 : Elected member of All India Congress Committee held at Calcutta.

1913 : President of Bihari Students Conference held at Monghyr (now Munger), Bihar.

1915 : Passed M.L. Examination from University of Calcutta.

1916 : Attended the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress as a delegate.

1917 : Nominated as a member of Patna University Senate.
Elected Assistant Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.
Attended the Special Session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay.

19 April, 1917 : At Motihari to assist Gandhiji in Champaran Satyagraha.
Before the arrest of Gandhiji at Motihari a plan was chalked out as how to go ahead with the movement. In this plan Rajendra Prasad was made Incharge of Bettiah office.
Sent a telegram to Braj Kishore Prasad to come to Motihari (Champaran).
Reached Motihari with Braj Kishore Prasad and met Gandhiji there.

December 1917 : Attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta.

1918 : Became Editor of *The Searchlight* published from Patna. Delivered speech at Bihar Provincial Conference held at Patna.

August 29-September 1, 1918 : Attended the Special Session of Indian National Congress held at Bombay as an elected member from Bihar and Orissa.

December 26-31, 1918 : Attended the 33rd annual session of Indian National Congress held at Delhi as an elected member from Bihar and Orissa.

1919 : Signed the Satyagraha pledge.

May 1919 : Participated in a joint meeting of Patna Provincial Association and Patna Bar Association.

July 19, 1919 : Participated in a joint meeting of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and Bihar Provincial Association.

August 17-18, 1919 : Participated at a separate meeting of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee held at Laheriasarai (Darbhanga) in Bihar.

December 27-30, 1919 : Attended the 34th session of the Congress held at Amritsar. Elected member of All India Congress Committee from Bihar and Orissa.

May 30-31, 1920 : Attended the All India Congress Committee meeting held at Banaras.

August 28-29, 1920 : Presided over the special session of the Bihar Provincial Conference held at Bhagalpur, Bihar.
Joined Non-Co-operation Movement.

(i) Gave up his practice at the Patna High Court.
(ii) Resigned his membership of the Senate of Patna

University.

November—(iii) Withdrew his candidature for the Legislative Council elections to be held.

(iv) Explained the Non-Co-operation policy and programmes at several meetings held at many places including Chhota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas.

December 26-31, 1920 : Attended the 35th session of Indian National Congress held at Nagpur.

January 5, 1921 : Founder Principal of Bihar Vidyapith, Patna.

March 1921 : Started Hindi weekly *Desh*.

March 31-April 1, 1921 : Attended as a delegate the meeting of All India Congress Committee held at Vijayawada.

August 16, 1921 : Attended the meeting of the Working Committee of All India Congress Committee at Patna.

October 1921 : Took part in Bihar Provincial Conference held at Arrah in Bihar.

November 1921 : Condemned the government repression.

December 27-28, 1921 : Attended the 36th session of Indian National Congress held at Ahmedabad as a delegate member of the Subjects Committee.

March 10, 1922 : Witnessed the trial of Mahatma Gandhi in the Court of Sessions Judge at Sabarmati, Gujarat.

1922 : Visited Assam on anti-opium campaign.

December 1922 : Attended the 37th annual session of Indian National Congress held at Gaya, Bihar.
Became General Secretary of the Congress.
Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha held at Gaya.

January 1-2, 1923 : Appointed Working General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha.

January 27, 1923 : Resigned the editorship of Hindi Weekly *Desh.*

April 1923 : A member of Election Committee, Bihar.

May 1, 1923 : Led hundreds of Congress volunteers from Bihar to participate in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha.
A member of Gandhi Seva Sangh.
Chancellor, Bihar Vidyapith, Patna.

May 1923 : Resigned from the Congress Working Committee.

October 1923 : Elected Chairman of Patna Municipality and remained there for a year (1924).

October 5, 1924 : Addressed a meeting held at Patna on Gandhi's release from hospital in Poona.

November 30, 1924 : Presided over a conference of representative of Municipalities and District Boards at Patna.

December 13-14, 1924 : A Khadi Exhibition was organised at Patna under his guidance.

December 23, 1924 : Inauguarated the All India Swadeshi Exhibition at the Belgaum Congress.

April 4, 1925 : Attended the Bihar Provincial Hindu Conference held at Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

September 1925 : Became one of the life trustees and a member of All India Spinners' Association—Became an agent for Bihar branch of A.I.S.A.

1926 : President of Bihar Provincial Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Darbhanga.

December 1927 : Attended the annual session of Congress held at Madras.

Jan.-Sep., 1928 : Went on an European tour.

1928 : Toured Ceylon, England.

1928 : Also visited Santasburg near Vienna to attend a No War Conference.

1928 : Visited Switzerland, Barnvita, Lausanne, Geneva, London. Attended Youth Conference at Amsterdam (Holland), visited Berlin Leipzig, Munich (Germany), Venice, Rome, Marseilles and returned Bombay in second week of September 1928.

December 12, 1928 : Addressed the anti-Simon Commission public meeting held at Patna.

March 1929 : Appointed Secretary of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.

July 14, 1929 : Criticised the Law of Sedition at citizens of Patna meeting held at Gulabbagh, Patna.

December 9, 1929 : Elected President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.

July 5-6, 1930 : Arrested and sent to Hazaribagh Central Jail.

March 29-31, 1931 : Attended Indian National Congress held at Karachi.

April 25-26, 1931 : Presided over the fourth session of Manbhum District Conference held at Hutnura, a village near Purulia.

1931 : Attended the Political Conference held at Jehanabad (Gaya).

January 3, 1932 : Arrested at Patna under Defence of India Rules.

June 1932 : Released from Hazaribagh central jail.

1932 : Visited Banaras, Bombay and Calcutta for fund collection.

September 1932 : Visited Gandhiji who was on fast unto death at Poona.

1932 : Attended Anti-Untouchability Conference held at Patna.

November 1932 : Attended Unity Conference held at Allahabad.

1933 : Acting President of the Congress.

January 6, 1933 : Arrested for fifteen months and sent to Hazaribagh central jail.

January 17, 1934 : Released from Hazaribagh central jail.

January 29, 1934 : Issued an appeal regarding setting up non-official agencies like Bihar Central Relief Committee for earth quake victims.

October 3, 1934 : Presided over the 48th session of Indian National Congress held at Bombay on October 26-28, 1934.

Jan. 23-March 1, 1935 : Made efforts from February 1935 onwards for settlement of the communal problem with M.A. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League.

March 1935 : Undertook a tour of Punjab.

April 1935 : Held a meeting of All India Congress Committee at Jabalpur (Central Provinces).

1935 : Attended a meeting of Provincial Political Conference in Berar.

1935 : President, Quetta Central Relief Committee.

April 1935 : Inaugurated the Karnataka Provincial Conference at Mangalore.

1935 : Toured Mysore State, Sholapur, Satara, Poona, Belgaum, Malram, Ratnagiri, Ahmednagar, etc.

From 10 Nov., 1935 : Toured Andhra Desa.

Dec. 1 to Dec. 8, 1935 : Visited Kerala and delivered speeches at different places in the province.

1935 : Visited Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, Cochin, Kanya-Kumari, Puri, Visakhapatnam, Raipur, Wardha.

December 12, 1935 : Inaugurated the Khadi Exhibition at Bombay.

December 28, 1935 : Read out a message on the celebration of Golden Jubilee of Indian National Congress at Bombay.

January 15-16, 1936 : Attended the political conference at Chatra, District Hazaribagh.

April 12-14, 1936 : Attended the 49th session of Indian National Congress held at Lucknow.

April 24-25, 1936 : President, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Nagpur; President, Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti formed by the Sammelan.

1936 : General Secretary of All India Congress Parliamentary Party.

April 28, 1936 : Attended Congress Working Committee meeting at Nagpur.

1936 : Elected President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.

1937 : Chairman, Bihar Kisan Enquiry Committee.

April-May 1937 : Addressed the Champaran District Political Conference held at Dhaka and Gaya District Political Conference at Warsaliganj.

May 5-7, 1937 : Attended National Educational Conference held at Patna.

1937 : Visited the N.W.F.P. to assist the Congress group to form a ministry.

1937 : Went to Kanpur for settling the dispute between mill-owners and workers being Chairman, Labour Enquiry

Committee set up by U.P. Government.

1937 : Attended the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.

May 1938 ; President of Ramgrah Congress Reception Committee.

1938 : Member, Bihar Education Reorganisation Committee.

April 1-6, 1938 : Attended meeting of Congress Working Committee as a member held at Calcutta.

May 15-19, 1938 : Attended the meeting of Congress Working Committee as member held at Bombay.

July 23-27, 1938 : Attended the meeting of Congress Working Committee at Wardha.

Sep. 22 Oct. 2, 1938 : Attended the Congress Working Committee meeting held at Delhi.

1938 : Member of the Congress Parliamentary Committee.

1939 : Resigned from the Congress Working Committee.

April 30, 1939 : Elected President of the Congress after the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose.

January 11-14, 1939 : Attended Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli (Gujarat).

September 8-15, 1939 : Attended a Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha.

October 9-10, 1939 : Presided over a meeting of All India Congress Committee at Wardha.

January 19-21, 1940 : Presided over the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha.
Moved the main resolution on 'India and the War Crisis' at the Subjects Committee at Ramgarh session of the Congress.

Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 1940 : Attended meeting of Congress Working Committee, Patna.

March 19, 1940 : Delivered the welcome speech of the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress.

July 3-7, 1940 : Attended Congress Working Committee at New Delhi.

April 1941 : Inaugural speech at Political Conference held at Harihar, Mysore District.

June 21-22, 1942 : Attended the Congress Working Committee meeting at Bombay.

August 9, 1942 : Arrested at Patna and sent to Bankipur jail.

June 15, 1945 : Released from the Hazaribagh central jail.

1945 ; Attended the Shimla Conference, held from 25 June to 1 July 1945.
A member of Central Election Committee.

September 1945 : Attended the Congress Working Committee at Poona.

August 12, 1946 : Member of Parliamentary Committee at Delhi.

August 27, 1946 : Participated in Congress Working Committee meeting held at Delhi.

September 2, 1946 · Minister of Food and Agriculture in the Interim Government.

September 7, 1946 : Resigned from Presidentship of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee.

November 5, 1946 : Reached Patna to ease communal tension.

November 23-24, 1946 : Participated in 54th session of Indian National Congress held at Meerut.

December 11, 1946 : Elected President of the Constituent Assembly of India, worked in this capacity till 1949,

January 15, 1948 : Left the Government.

November 18, 1947-December 1948 : Congress President.

April 17, 1948 : Attended Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha.

1952 : Elected Republic First President.

1957 : Re-elected President for the 2nd term.

1962 : Relinquished Presidentship in May 1962 having refused to continue for a 3rd term.

Feb. 28, 1963 : Breathed his last.

PART I

1

THE PROFESSION OF LAW AND WHAT IT MEANS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Litigation in India is a very expensive affair. The whole system of Law Courts and the method whereby one is enabled to obtain justice require enormous expenditure—often by the time one gets the fruit of the decree, one has had to spend more than the property in suit is worth.

To begin with, the so-called legal charges come to a high figure. The litigant has to pay a pretty heavy court fee for getting justice, and surprising though it may seem, it is a fact that in some provinces at any rate, judicial stamp is a profitable source of revenue to the Government. In the next place every law court is infested with a number of *amalas*, subordinate officers, peons, etc., each one of whom has to be paid a certain fee, not authorised by law, but not for that reason any the less rigorously exacted, as the litigant knows that a refusal to pay these perquisites of the myrmidons of the law is sure to cost him more than those perquisites, besides entailing on him a lot of worry, trouble and perhaps insult.

It must be said to the credit of the judiciary that as a body they are not open to corruption in the sense that they may be bribed, although there are exceptions. But the highest judiciary is not altogether free from other kinds of influences. The anxiety to

**Young India*, October 6, 1920.

clear the file, to show quick disposal of cases, and to sick to the technicalities of the law as distinct from what the justice of the case demands, are responsible for many a wrong decision. In arguing a case before a Bench of two judges of a High Court, a Vakil happened to make the unfortunate remark, "My Lords, the justice of the case demands, and after all you have to do justice" when he was sharply interrupted by one of the judges, "Mr. . . ., you are entirely mistaken. We do nothing ot the sort. We decide cases on the record before us."

The Vakil could only retort. My Lords—I am distressed to hear that. That gives the keynote to the attitude of most judges. The subordinate judiciary depend also for their promotion and preferment upon showing speedy disposal and a clear file. They are also not free from the other kind of corruption, namely, that of consulting or considering the whims or what they fancy to be the wishes of other authorities. This happens especially when you have the Government taking a keen interest in the result of litigation either as a party or otherwise.

The law's delays and the uncertainties of litigation are proverbial. Some cases have been fought for years. A case which comes to be decided in the normal course takes at least a year before it is taken up for hearing; the appeal to the High Court normally takes two years and if it goes to the Privy Council it takes another 3 to 4 years. But this is so in short cases. Big cases are heard for months and some cases are known to have been heard from day to day for 12 months or more. Apart from the strain on the purse of the litigant, the strain on the nerves is simply unbearable. One cannot be sure if even in 25 p.c. of the cases that come before a Court, real substantial justice is done. Litigation has come to be regarded, and rightly so, as a sort of gambling. However, just your cause and, however, true your case, you cannot be sure of winning it. The lawyer is mostly responsible for this uncertainty. Many a bad cause is won by a so-called good advocate and many a true cause has been lost on account of the folly or incapacity of the lawer engaged or the inability of the party to engage an expensive lawyer. In fact the greater a lawyer's ability to confound and confuse the judge and the true issues in the case, the higher is the fee that he commande. And what has the country to pay for this ability to make the "worse appear the better reason ?"

The fee which lawyers charge is out of all proportion to the

amount of work done as also to their ability, with that of menas compared in other professions. Some lawyers have been known to charge as much as fifty thousand rupees as perusal fee, that is fee, for reading the papers of the case which they have to argue. A perusal of Rs. 2 to 5 per page of the paper is not an unusual charge for first-rate practitioners. In some cases the services of practitioners. In some cases the services of practitioners who have occupied seats in the High Court Benches have been regularly put to auction for contending litigants to bid for. Over and above the perusal fee some lawyers also charge what is called a consultation fee, i.e., the fee which the lawyer in question gets for consulting with other lawyers engaged with him on the same side and for enabling him to clear his own ideas and saving his own time by taking notes of cases and precedents collected by the juniors. The usual fee is Rs. 85 per hour of consultation and in some cases even more. All this is before the case is actually taken up for argument. For the argument a daily fee is usually charged by those who have attained a high standing in the profession. A fee of Rs. 510 per day of 4½ to 5 hours' work in court is now the usual fee. It is also the common practice to charge a full day's fee even when the case is part-heard for only an hour or less. It very often happens that a lawyer is engaged on behalf of an appellant in the High Court, and having argued the case for the appellant, he does not sit in the Court to listen to the argument of the other side but goes to another Court to argue another case for another fee. And if the party insists upon his attending the Court while the adversary is arguing, he is required to pay Rs. 1020 per day. It is not an uncommon occurrence that a lawyer engaged by a party is unable to attend the case, as he is engaged in some other court at the time when it is taken up. Some lawyers in such a case refund the fee, but, there are others who would tell the client that what he (the client) engaged for the money he paid, was not their service but their *chance* of appearing, which means in other words the chance of their not appearing on the other side. But the fees become really fabulous when a High Court lawyer is taken to a mofussil station. The usual charge with some lawyers is Rs. 5000 for the first day and Rs. 1530 for each subsequent day. In particular cases even this figure has been exceeded, Even in cases when a lawyer has been engaged by the month the fee has been Rs. 50,000 or Rs. 60,000.

It should not be supposed that the fee charged is at all commensurate with the ability or the labour of the man who is fortunate enough to command it. The difference in ability between one lawyer and another is not so great as to entitle the one to Rs. 1500 and the other to Rs. 150 or less. Even in case of junior practitioners the disparity between the fee of one man and another is too great to be justified by any standard of comparison of their abilities.

But the worst feature of the system of administration of justice now prevalent is the wholesale demoralisation of the people. The Law Courts are largely responsible for the constantly diminishing respect for truth. The law of evidence insists on a standard of proof which can very seldom be satisfied unless resourse is had to perjury. The habits of the people are not business-like and what they do not take care to perfect in the beginning has to be remedied when the matter goes to a court of law by suborning false evidence. In some parts of the country every village has its tout whose sole business and means of livelihood is setting people by the ears of one another. His ability consists in gettings up false cases. His title to position in society lies in his capacity to work mischief. The law courts are full of this class of people. If you go to an out of the way village and try to settle a dispute between two parties, you are usually told by witnesses whom you may examine that they will tell the truth as they are not appearing before a court but before a *punch*. It may be that respectable lawyers do not actually coach witnesses or forge documents, but there can be no doubt that advice on evidence amounts to nothing less than advice to the client —"Get this particular class of witnesses, true if you can, but any how get them to prove this and this." There is no denying the fact that by suggestion, insinuation, and innuendo the lawyer indicates what he wants to enable him to plead the case successfully and the client with the help of the tout procures what the lawyer wants. In arguing a cause the only limit to which even a respectable lawyer puts, which under professional etiquitte he is required to put to himself is, abstention from false or untrue statement of facts. He is free to put the most absurd interpretation on documents or law provided he can do so with impunity on account of the weakness of the judge on his adversary. And the higher the status of the lawyer the greater the impunity with which he can bamboozle the

judge.

Then again the lawyer and the judge are not free to deal with a case on its merits. The judge can decide the facts as he likes, but for the law he has to depend not on the acts of the legislature alone but on a large mass of decisions which are not always illuminating or reconcilable. And the greater the number of decisions which a lawyer can skillfully fling in the face of the judge, the greater is his appreciation by the litigant public and the greater are the chances of his confounding the judge.

To add to all this, there are appeals, second appeals, appeals to the Privy Council and so forth, and not infrequently the decisions of trial courts are reversed by the High Courts and again restored by the Privy Council. The frequency of reversals, the want of ability in judges, the presence of ability in lawyers, never leave a litigant without a chance of success and hope eternal springs in human breast." He sometimes wins no doubt but he wins when he has lost all, his money, his honour and his character.

2

HISTORY OF THE CHAMPARAN SATYAGRAHA

RAJENDRA PRASAD

1

LAND AND LIFE

Champaran is the name of an administrative district situated in the north-western corner of the Province of Bihar and Orissa in British India. To its north are the Himalayan mountains and the territory of Nepal; on its west is the district of Gorakhpur in the United Provinces; to its east, is the district of Muzaffarpur and to its south the district of Saran. The name of a part of the southern portion of the Himalayan range is Someshwar, and it falls in part in Champaran. That constitutes the boundary between Nepal and Champaran, It is about 1,500 feet high but one of its spurs on which stands a fortress is 2,884 feet high.

The biggest river in this district is the Narayani which is also known as the Salagrami or the Gandak. In olden times it flowed right through the middle of the district; but it changed its course and today it forms its southern boundary. It rises in the Himalayas near a place called Tribeni. Boats can go right up to Tribeni. During summer there is not much water in the river, but even then country boats can ply. During the rains the volume of water becomes very large and its current very strong. The river is notorious for alligators and crocodiles.

The Puranic story of *Gajagraha* has a reference to a place on the banks of this river in the district of Saran. The river second in importance to the Gandak which deserves mention is the Chhoti or Small Gandak. It rises from the Someshwar Hill and flows across the district. Up to a certain distance it bears the name of Haraha, then it becomes the Sikrahana and further down it becomes known as the Burhi or old Gandak. Many small rivers rising in the hills come and join it with the result that the Sikrahana which during summer has hardly a bed of 100 yards under water becomes about 2 miles in width at places during the rainy season. Apart from the smaller rivers, there is a canal made by the British Government known as the Tribeni Canal.

It has already been said that at one time the Gandak flowed through the middle of the district. The river has changed its course, but traces of its old course are still there in the shape of lakes, about 43 in number, in the whole district. Many of these are deep and remain under water throughout the year. Their water, however, is not always drinkable. It is used in indigo factories many of which have been constructed on the banks of these lakes.

Champaran has two kinds of land. To the north of the Sikrahana the soil is hard and the level of the land low. It is, therefore, fit for paddy cultivation. It cannot grow indigo. It is called *bangar* locally. To the south of the Sikrahana, the soil has large admixture of sand in it and paddy cannot be grown on it. But it is very good for maize, wheat, etc. It is very good for indigo plantaion also. It is locally known a *bheet*. The lands in the Terai or hill valley are very fertile, and although the climate of the locality is unhealthy for men, it is very good for crops. In these parts the crop most grown is paddy which my be considered the staple crop of the district. About 56 p.c., of the cultivated land is paddy growing. There is a saying current among villagers which may be translated as follows. "Majhowa is a wonderful country where even crows do not care for rice." Majhowa is the name of the biggest *pargana* in Champaran.

The climate of Champaran is considered to be worse than that of many other districts of Bihar. In the Terai it is very bad indeed. Malarial fever rages there, and after the rainy season almost every house becomes a hospital. The climate of the

southern portion also cannot be said to be good. As compared with other districts of Bihar it is cool. For this reason it is liked by Europeans. There is something in the nature of the soil, water and climate of places on the banks of the Sikrahana and the Gandak which causes goitre to the residents. In these parts the people, too, are not intelligent. One comes across many persons who are lame, decrepit and with goitres. There are many idiots also among them. They do not know how to count, cannot talk coherently, nor understand what others say, and smile and laugh idiotically. Such idiots are locally known as *bagar*, and in other districts of Bihar, *bagar* of Majhowa is a well understood expression. It is said that in some places even lower animals have goitres.

There are only two towns in the district— Motihari, which is the headquarters of the district, and Bettiah which was formerly a centre of trade and is even now the seat of the Maharaja of Bettiah and the headquarters of a sub-division. The area of the district is 3,531 square miles. There are 2,841 villages in it and the population according to the census of 1911 is 19,08,385. About 2 p.c., of the population livs in towns and the rest live in villages. The population per square mile is 540. Population in southern and eastern portion of the district, which border on Saran and Muzaffarpur, is denser, while that in the north-western portion which has a bad climate is thin. It is worth mentioning that large numbers of people have emigrated from Saran and Muzaffarpur and settled in this district and their number is increasing. They come and settle here as agriculturists.

Like other districts of Bihar there is preponderance of Hindus in this district. Their number is 16,17,456, while that of Mussalmans 2,86,067 only. In and near Bettiah there is a large population of Christians. It is said that the wife of Raja Dhrub Singh of Bettiah was ill and a Christian missionary cured her. The Raja was pleased and about 1745 A.C. set apart some land for the Christian missionary there. The number of converts began to increase and they now count 2,775 souls. The peculiarity of the Christians of Bettiah is this that there is no difference in the mode of life and dress of Christians and other inhabitants of the place except that their women wear a kind of gown which Hindu women do not wear. Hindus and Mussalmans in this district live in more or less the same way as in other districts of

Bihar. There is a special caste of Hindus which one does not find in other districts. They are known as Tharus. They are 34,602 in number and live mostly in the Terai area. They can bear the climate of that locality better than other people. They are simple and truthful. They shun litigation and know the art of agriculture very well. The least interference or oppression causes them to vacate their villages and emigrate to other and safer places. They grow paddy and live quite happily.

The language of the Hindus and Mussalmans of Champaran is a dialect of Hindi known as Bhojpuri which agrees almost entirly with the language of Saran. In the dialect of the south-eastern portion of the district adjoining Muzaffarpur district there are traces of the influence of Maithili. The language of the Tharus is also Bhojpuri, but it contains some words of their original primitive language.

2

HISTORY OF CHAMPARAN

Champaran is a corrupt form of the word Champaranya. It is mentioned in the Puranas. In its jungles were the places of penance of Rishis. It is said that Tappa Duho Suho is named after Durani and Surani, the two wives of Raja Uttanapada. Dhruva was the son of this Raja and he was born in this *tapovana* and did his penance here. The *ashrama* of Valmiki Muni was also situate within this district. Janaki after her exile took shelter in this *ashrama* of Valmiki and her two sons Lava and Kusha were born there. The battle between Ramachandra and his two sons Lava and Kusha took place somewhere within this district. The story is current that the capital of Birat Raja where the Pandavas lived during their exile was also in this district, and a place called Barahi is still pointed out as that capital. It is at a short distance from Ramnagar. It is believed by the local people that the kingdom of Raja Bideha was also here and he used to live at a place called Jankigarh which is also known as Chankigarh.

The Lichchhavis reigned in Champaran about 600 B.C. They fought against Ajatashatru of Magadha, were defeated and had to pay tribute to Magadha. Traces of forts are still extant at Nandangarh and other places and they are said by historians to belong to the time of the Lichchhavis. Coins have also been

discovered in theses places which are of about 1000 B.C.

Numerous memorials of the Buddhistic period are found in Champaran. Buddha is said to have travelled through this district in his journey from Plasi to Kusinar. His ashes are said to be lying in some stupa at Lauria Nandangarh or near about it. Many pillars erected by Ashoka are still seen in several parts of the district. Most of the places where such pillars stand are known as Lauriya, that is, the place of the pillar. It appears from this that at one time the Buddhists had great influence there. Raja Ashoka started on his pilgrimage from Pataliputra (Patna) and went to Ramapurwa passing Kesaria, Lauriya, Areraj and Lauriya Nandangarh, and he set up pillars in all these places. In those days Nepal also formed a part of the kingdom of Magadha, and this used to be the route for officials going from Patna to Nepal *via* Bhikhna Thorce. The Chinese travellers travelled by this route. Both Fa Hian and Huen Tsang have mentioned these places.

After the Buddhists, the Gupta kings reigned over Champaran and Raja Harshavardhana's flag also flew there. The history of the period prior to the 13th century A.C. is not available in a reliable form but it is said that at one time the Cheddis also reigned over Champaran.

Evidence is available that later on Champaran passed under the sway of the kings of Tirhoot. The two kingdoms deserving of mention are those of Simra and Sugaon. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Mussalmans invaded Champaran but they did not quite establish themselves there. At the beginning of the 16th century, Sikandar Lodi took possession of Tirhoot and thenceforward Tirhoot which included Champaran became a part of the Muslim Empire. No separate history of Champaran is available after this, as it thenceforward became mixed up with that of other districts. In the 18th century when Alivardikhan became Governor of Bihar and Bengal he invaded Champaran and he was helped by the Afghans of Darbhanga. His invasion was successful and he carried away a large amount of booty. Sometime later the Afghans who had helped him rebelled against him but were defeated by Alivardikhan. Two of these Afghans, Shamsherkhan and Sardarkhan, took refuge in Bettiah Raj. Alivardikhan for this reason invaded Bettiah with the result that the Raja of Bettiah handed over those Afghans with all their

dependants to him.

About 1760 there was a war between Shah Alam and the English in which the latter were successful. One of the helpers of Shah Alam was Khadim Husainkhan, the Subedar of Purnea. After his defeat he fled towards Bettiah. Miran and General Claude pursued him but on account of the accidental death of Miran by a stroke of lightning General Claude had to retrace his steps. But before doing so he realized a tribute from the Raja of Bettiah. The Raja of Bettiah shortly afterwards raised the standard of revolt and Mir Kasim invaded Bettiah and suppressed the rebellion. In 1765 Champaram was also granted to the English by Shah Alam along with Bengal and Bihar. It should not be inferred from this, however, that there was peace after this event. Shortly afterwards Raja Jugalkishor of Bettiah declared war against the English but he was defeated and fled to Bundelkhand leaving his Kingdom. After this time the condition of Champaran was very deplorable. The tribute payable to the English went on dwindling. The English thought that without the return of Raja Jugalkishor, Bettiah would not become prosperous again and that their revenue would not increase. They accordingly asked Raja Jugalkishorsingh to return and made over to him the two parganas of Majhowa and Simraon in 1771: and two other parganas of Mehsi and Babra were given to his kinsmen Srikrishnasingh and Awadhutsingh.

In 1791 when the Decennial Settlement was made the two parganas of Majhowa and Simraon were settled with Raja Jugalkishorsingh's son, Birkishorsingh, and the two parganas of Mehsi and Babra which had been granted to Srikrishnasingh and Awadhutsingh came to constitute the Sheohar Raj. Two other Zamindaris of Madhuban and Ramnagar also came into existence about that time. This settlement was confirmed in 1793 at the time of the Permanent Settlement. Sometime later pargana Babra was transferred to the district of Muzaffarpur and only small parts of Sheohar Raj remained in Champaran. There are several small Zamindaris now in existence but the principal Zamindaris in the district are even now only three, namely, Bettiah, Ramnagar and Madhuban. It should not be understood, however, that these Zamindaris had their origin about this time. The Bettiah Raj is a very old Raj. It was granted for the first time by Emperor Shahjahan to Ujjainsing and his descendants have always held it. Similarly, the Ramnagar Raj is also an ancient Raj. It is said

that the ancestors of the Ramnagar Raj came from Chitor and conquered Nepal and they founded Ramnagar. They got the title of Raja from Emperor Aurangzib in 1676 A. D.

3

EUROPEANS AND INDIGO CULTIVATION

The area of the Bettiah Raj is about 2,000 sq. miles. Formerly communication was not as convenient as it is now. Therefore, for better management the estate was divided into small parts and leased out to lessees. The lessees had to look after the parts leased out to them, to realize rent from the cultivators and to pay the same to the Estate. In the earlier days all lessees were Indians and they had been there from before 1793. Later on Europeans who engaged in indigo and sugarcane cultivation began to take leases from the Bettiah and Ramnagar Estates. The oldest indigo factory was that established by Col. Hickey at Bara. Later on Turkaulia, Peepra, Motihari and Rajpur factories were established. As time went on, new factories were established and they went on replacing the Indian lessees in the Bettiah Raj. In the early times these factories were established only in places where the soil was fit for indigo and sugarcane cultivation. But when they had established their influence fully, some Europeans began to settle in the north-western portion of the district also in about 1875. The soil being unfit for indigo cultivation, they had to find out other means of income. In this way the whole of the district became honey-combed with European factories and now-a-days there are about 70 such factories, a detailed account of which will be found in later pages. For building their factories they took small plots of land from the Bettiah Raj on perpetual lease. The Bettiah Raj had become encumbered with debt in about 1888. Mr. T. Gibbon, its manager, raised a loan of about 85 lakhs in England to liquidate that debt. It was arranged that the Bettiah Raj should settle a portion of its Estate with European factory owners in perpetuity, and these latter would pay the reserved rent towards the liquidation of the debt. Accordingly, lands fetching five lakhs and a half per year were settled in perpetual or *mokarri* lease with fourteen factories. The result was that this permanent interest in the land strengthened their position

very much. Besides this they also went on taking temporary leases from the Raj. Some villages were settled in perpetuity with factories by the Ramnagar Raj also; but it is difficult to find when and under what circumstances this took place. Within recent times some factories have also purchased Zamindari rights in some villages, but that is to a very small extent only. At present there are 36 European lessees under the Bettiah Raj of whom 23 deal in indigo. More than one half of the district is in the possession of European lessees.

In the beginning the planters used to cultivate sugarcane along with indigo. But from about 1850 the diminished sugarcane plantation on account of the larger profit derived from indigo. Ever since then the planters have carried on indigo cultivation under two systems: (a) *Zerait*—i.e., departmental cultivation under their direct supervision. (b) *Asamiwar*—i.e., cultivation through cultivators or tenants.

Zerait—The factory owners under this system used to cultivate the land in their possession with the help of their own ploughs and bullocks. This land used to be either the proprietors' (their lessors') private land or land in which the factory owner had acquired rights of occupancy. The entire burden of cultivation used to be on the factory. The only connection that the tenants had with this cultivation was that they were liable to render service on the land or to have their bullocks and ploughs impressed for such cultivation under the orders of the factory. The factory had no doubt to pay something for this kind of service—but it will be seen later on that the wages used to be so low that the tenants could never feel satisfied. To make matters worse the factory underlings used to deduct a discount from the wages so paid. Mr. J. A. Sweeney, the Settlement Officer, stated in his evidence before the Champaran Agrarian Committee that "so far as he was aware no factory was fully self-contained then in the matter of cultivating its rural lands".

Asamiwar.—Under this system the factory got indigo grown by the tenants. This used to be done in several ways, but the most prevalent method was that known as *Tinkathia*. *Kushki* and *Kurtauli* system also deserve mention as other methods.

About the *kurtauli* system it was said by the Commissioner of Patna in 1885: "The *kurtauli* lease is a new institution dating from a very few years back . . . . . There are growing up in our

midst and in spite of our efforts at beneficent legislation, a system under which the ryot mortgages his entire holding and the very site of his house for a period probably extending beyond his own life-time, redemption being contingent on the repayment of a loan; the ryot, to use the common expression, is selling himself body and soul into hopeless servitude."

This system is not widely prevalent in Champaran but there is no doubt that it is very harmful to the interests of ryots.

As said above, *Tinkathia* was the most prevalent system in Champaran. According to it the factory owners got the tenant to cultivate indigo in a portion of his holding for which a fixed price was paid. About 1860 the portion so reserved for indigo used to be 5 *kathas* per *bigha* or one fourth of the tenant's holding. Sometime later, about 1867, this area was reduced from 5 *kathas* to 3 *kathas* per *bigha*. Since then the system came to be known as *tinkathia* (or the system of three *kathas*). When the factories were being established for the first time, their owners had no permanent interest in land. They used to take short term leases from the Bettiah Raj and to grow indigo on lands in their possession under the *Zerait* system. But that was in small quantities. They would place temptation in the way of the Bettiah Raj by offering to take a lease on a reserved rent equal to the gross rental realizable from tenants, and when they got the lease, they would get indigo cultivated by the tenants for their own benefit. They used to make much profit from indigo. The only losers were the tenants. It is thus apparent that whenever a factory got possession of a village, its first attempt would be to bring as much land as possible under indigo cultivation; and for this they used to cheat, cajole and coerce the simple tenants into agreeing to grow indigo on their lands. After sometime these agreements used to be reduced to writing as *sattas*. One of the conditions in such agreements or *sattas* used to be that the tenant would grow indigo on 3 *kathas* per *bigha* of his holding for a number of years—sometimes for 20, 25, or even 30 years. The particular plot of his holding which would be reserved for indigo would be selected by the factory. The land would be ploughed and otherwise made fit for cultivation by the tenant under the supervision of the factory. If the crop was good a fixed price per *bigha* would be paid to the tenant. But if the crop was not bumper, then whatever the reason for it may be, the tenant would

get only a reduced price. If the tenant failed to grow indigo, he was liable to pay a heavy sum by way of damages for his breach.

There is evidence to show that both the *Zerait* and *Asamiwar* systems of cultivation have been in vogue ever since indigo cultivation was introdued into Champaram. It has already been stated that originally the indigo used to be grown by tenants on 5 *kathas* out of each *bigha* of the holding, and this was reduced in 1867 to 3 *kathas* per *bigha.* In 1909 the Planters' Association passed a resolution that this area should be further reduced from 3 to 2 *kathas* per *bigha* but it is not known if this resolution was given effect to by the factories. It is certain, however, that many factories did not observe it and many did not require to do it. The reason for this will be stated hereafter. Similarly, the price payable by the factories to the tenants was also raised from time to time under pressure from the Government and the tenants. Before 1867 the tenant used to be paid Rs. 6-8-0 for every acre of indigo. After the disturbances of that year the planters under Government pressure increased the rate to Rs. 9 per acre. This was further raised in 1876 to Rs. 10-5-0, in 1897 to Rs. 12-7-0 and in 1909 after Mr. Gourlay's Report to Rs. 13-8-0 per acre. Apart from this there has been an idea ever since 1878 that no rent should be payable by the tenant for the area under indigo; but this rule has not been followed by the factories.

The cultivation of indigo was more extensive in Champaran than in any other district of Bihar. During the survey of 1892-97 indigo used to be grown on 95,970 acres, that is, on 6.63 per cent of the land under cultivation. Out of this about one fourth was cultivated under the *Zerait* system and the remaining three-fourths was cultivated under the *Asamiwar*, that is, the *tinkathia* system. In those days 33,000 labourers used to work in indigo factories. Later on by reason of the introduction of German synthetic dyes, profits fell and the planters reduced the cultivation of indigo, so much so, that in 1905 the area under indigo cultivation fell to 47,800 acres and in 1914 to 8,100 acres. In 1914 war was declared between Germany and England and the import of German dyes ceased. Indigo began to look up once again, and the planters increased its cultivation. In 1916 indigo was grown on 21,900 acres and in 1917 on 26,848 acres, out of which about two-thirds were grown *asamiwar* and only one-third under the *zerait* system. The planters, however, did not lose much on account of the fall in the price of indigo, as they devised means,

to be detailed later, to transfer the loss to the shoulders of the poor tenants.

There are two kinds of indigo—Sumatra indigo and Java or Natal indigo. Before 1905 only Sumatra indigo used to be grown. For this crop the land is tilled from *Aswin* to *Phalgun* (September to March) and the seed is sown in March. The crop is cut in *Asarh* (June to July), and this is known as the *Morhan* crop. The stump that is left in the field is cut once again in *Bhadon* (August to September) and this is known as *khunti*. The Java or Natal indigo is sown in *Kartik* to *Aghan* (October to November) and is cut at the same time as the Sumatra crop. From 100 maunds of leaves and stalk about 10 seers of indigs cakes are prepared.

4

GRIEVANCES OF TENANTS

The *tinkathia* system has been mentioned in the last chapter. It is no exaggeration to say that this was at the root of all the troubles and miseries of the tenants of Champaran.

In 1860 there was a great agitation in Bengal against indigo. In those days Babu Harischandra Mukerjee was of great help to the tenants and the British Indian Association also sympathized with them. The miseries of the tenants melted the hearts of the Christian Missionaries. There were many among British officials, too, who sympathized with the tenants. Of those Mr. William Herschell, who later on became Sir William Herschell, and Mr. Ashley Eden, who became the Lieutenant-Govenor of Bengal as Sir Ashley Eden, were the most noted. At their suggestion and on pressure from them the Government appointed a Commission with full powers to inquire into the grievances of the indigo tenants. Mr. Seton Kerr who was the secretary to the Government of Bengal was the president of the Commission and its members were Mr. Richard Temple, who later became the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal as Sir Richard Temple. Mr. Fergusson, a planter, Mr. John Sale, a missionary, and Babu Chandramohan Chatterjee who was an influential member of the British Indian Association. Tenants from the districts of Nadia and Jessore, where the indigo trouble was most acute, were brought under arrangements made by Harishchandra Mukerjee

to Calcutta to give evidence before the Commission Harishchandra Mukerjee himself gave evidence. Lalbihari Day in his *Bengal Peasant Life* has drawn a beautiful but heart-rending picture of the planter and the ryot of Bengal of those days. Mr. E. W. L. Tower who was at one time the Magistrate of Faridpur stated in his evidence before the Commission as follows :

> "There is one thing more. I wish to state that considerable odium has been thrown on the Missionaries for saying that 'Not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood.' That has been stated to be an anecdote. That expression is mine, and I adopt it in the fullest and broadest sense of its meaning as the result of my experience as Magistrate in the Faridpur District. I have seen several ryots, sent in to me as a Magistrate, who have been spread through the body. I have had ryots before me who have been shot down by Mr. Forde (a planter). I have put on record, how others have been first spread and then kidnapped; and such a system of carrying on indigo, I consider to be a system of blood-shed."

It appears from the Report of the Commission that the grievances of the tenants of Bengal were as follows :

(1) The contract which the tenants were made to enter into the planter regarding indigo was not voluntarily accepted by them but they were coerced.
(2) Some advance of money used to be forced upon them for growing indigo.
(3) They had to give their valuable time to the cultivation of indigo while it could have been more profitably employed in growing other crops.
(4) Their best lands were taken up for indigo growing. Sometimes even land on which another crop was growing used to be taken up for growing indigo and the standing crop destroyed.
(5) There was no certainty about the indigo crop with the result that the tenants very often could not repay even the advance which became a heavy burden on them.

(6) The underlings of factories used to oppress them.

(7) The factory owners and managers also used to employ force and beat them.

In the opinion of the Commission almost all the complaints were well-founded. They held that the tenants were not at all benefitted by the indigo cultivation. The planters reserved the right of selecting the lands for indigo and sometimes they caused land in which other crops were growing to be ploughed up for indigo. The factory *amlas* (employees) used to oppress them in various ways. A tenant who had once taken an advance could never extricate himself. The Commission recommended that if the tenants were to be made to grow indigo they should be paid at a rate which would satisfy them, and that if the system of contracts for indigo was to be continued, they should be for short terms and their accounts should be settled every year; the land on which indigo was to be grown should be mentioned in the contract itself. The planter should carry the indigo plant from the field to be factory at his own expense. The tenants should not be required to pay the price of the indigo seed. The tenants should be given the right to grow any other crop on the indigo land after the indigo crop was cut or that if they wanted to reserve the crop for seeds, they should be permitted to do so. Separate accounts should be kept for indigo and the rents payable by them. They also recommended that arrangements should be made for the protection of tenants. Sir John Peter Grant, the then Lt.-Governor of Bengal, accepted the recommendations almost in their entirely. The result of the action taken on this Report was that within a short time indigo cultivation disappeared altogether from Bengal. The reason of this was that without the oppressive system then in vogue, the planter could not make any profit out of indigo plantation.

About the same time the question of Bihar indigo planters was also raised but there was no Harishchandra Mukerjee in Bihar to take up the tenants' grievances, nor was there any one among the tenants who kept himself informed about the Calcutta Commission. It is true that some Bihar planters also gave evidence before the Commission from which it appears that the same system was in vogue in Bihar also. There was a difference only in one respect. The system of advances was not so oppressive to tenants in Bihar as it was in Bengal; but the other grievances were practically the same.

Although the tenants of Champaran have ever since been clamouring for redress of their grievances no effort was made to remove the root causes of their troubles until 1917, so much so that when Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Champaran in 1917 to enquire into the grievances of tenants, the planters began to say that they had no trouble with the tenants, and that all the trouble was created by outsiders. But this was later proved to be absolutely unfounded before the Commission. The Hon. Mr. Maude, in his speech on the Champaran Agrarian Bill before the Bihar Legislative Council, said as follows :

> "I have gone at what I am afraid is rather wearisome length into the past history of what may perhaps best be described as the indigo difficulty, because it is constantly asserted, and I have often heard it said, that there is in reality nothing wrong or rotten in the state of affairs, that every one concerned is perfectly happen so long as they are left alone and that it is only when outside influences and agitators come in that any trouble is experienced. I submit that this contention is altogether untenable in the light of the history of past fifty years of which I have endeavoured to present to the Council a brief sketch."

It is this tale of woe that is given in brief in the following pages.

The first indigo disturbance in Champaran of which any record is available was in 1867. It began in Lalsaraiya* factory. The tenants of Mouza Jaukathia refused to grow indigo and sowed other crops on indigo lands. The residents of other villages followed suit. The factory bungalow caught fire and was burnt. The planters even in those days tried to fasten the responsibility of this fire on the tenants as they did later on in connection with another fire in 1917, but no evidence of this was available. The complaints of the tenants were the same in 1917 as they were in 1867. The Commissioner of Patna in his report regarding this disturbance

* It is said of this factory as follows in the Champaran *Gazetteer* :

"At one time it was the most renowned indigo factory in Bihar, being the home of Mr. James Macleod, who was known as the king of planters. His stable contained 120 horses.

wrote to the Government that it was not only that indigo cultivation brought no profit to the tenants but that it caused actual monetaty loss to them; they were made to give contracts for indigo; their best lands were taken for indigo; indigo cultivation was a very difficult job; factory underlings used to oppress them. This disturbance caused a great consternation amongst the planters Indigo cultivation was stopped in a way and it seemed as if it would disappear altogether from Champaran. The planters pressed their case before the Government and the latter also helped them. As desired by the planters a Small Cause Court of two judges was established by the Government at Motihari to speedily dispose of cases instituted by planters for recovery of damages from the tenants for breach of their indigo contracts. The result was that what the planters wanted was achieved without their having to institute suits, and the efforts of the helpless tenants to get rid of the indigo oppression failed. There is no wonder that it was so, as the agriculturists as a class are timid and particularly those of a place like Champaran are very simple. The mere fact of the establishment of a Court at the instance of the planters was enough to cow them. Who can say that the tenants did not regard this action of the Government as one to help and uphold the planters ? Again, what chance was there for them to succeed in this unequal fight ? The few cases which did actually go to the Court were decided against the tenants. There is no doubt that even if it be assumed that the Government was not actuated by any desire to help the planters, the tenants believed this step to be for that purpose. It may be stated here that whatever sympathy the Government may have had with the tenants. It has always been exhibited in such a way that every attempt of the tenants to free themselves from indigo has been met by the Government with some action which went to help the planters. We shall see later on how special registrars were appointed and that will make the point clear. The Champaran *Gazetteer* says about this disturbance of 1867 as follows :

"The disputes between the ryots and the planters had at one time threatened to become very serious. The local officers almost animously reported that the cultivation of indigo had become very unpopular, and that there was not ryot who would not abandon the cultivation if he could, and this state

of things was ascribed as much to the insufficiency of remuneration which the ryots received as to the exactions, oppressions and annoyance to which they were exposed at the hands of the factory servants."

The Provincial Government wrote to the Government of India as follows above it :

"The time had passed when it could be hoped to carry on indigo concern profitably by forcing on the ryots a cultivation and labour which was to them unprofitable. The necessity of giving adequate remuneration had been recognised by the planters although they had too long refused to recognize the necessity of making such an advance in price but managers of the concerns now saw clearly the danger which they had so norrowly escapped and would in their own interest be careful to guard against falling into such an error again."

The planters under pressure from Government and finding tha without increasing the price of indigo it would be impossible for them to continue in Champaran, raised it from Rs. 6/8 to Rs. 9 per acre. The Local Government consequently did not find it necessary to take any further action. But the Government of India, reviewing the matter, made a most significant statement :

"The evils of the system were so great that the interposition of the Government might become unavoidable unless measures were taken to remove such elements of the system as were unjust and oppressive."

What the Government of India had anticipated came soon to be true and shortly after this rise in price signs of discontent among tenants began to manifest themselves in 1871. The price of indigo had no doubt been increased but no steps had been taken to remove the defects of the oppressive system. In 1871 the Lieut.-Governor, in reviewing the report of the Commissioner of Patna, wrote as follows :

"The practice under which the ryots were compelled to give up a portion of their land for indigo is the compulsory feature of the system to which His Honour has more specially alluded

as contrary to free trade principles. Again the practice of forcing the cultivators to exchange such of their lands as may be arbitrarily selected from time to time by the planter or his servant is an intolerable grievance as is well set forth by Mr. Forbes even where there is what purports to be an agreement. In these cases it is obvious that the character of the agreement is such that no person of power and influence equal to that of the planter himself would think, as mere matter of business, of entering into it."

The Press continued to comment on this subject in those days and the attention of the Government was also drawn to it from time to time. In 1875 the Commissioner of Patna proposed that a commission be appointed to inquire into indigo grievances. Sir Richard Temple was then the Lieut.-Governor. He thought that the appointment of a Commission would lead to agitation and he accordingly gave direction to district officers to decide disputs between planters and tenants in an impartial manner.

When the root cause of discontent had been left untouched, it was not to be expected that peace could be restored. In 1877 Mr. Stuart Bayley, the Commissioner of Patna, wrote that although the appointment of a Commission had been considered inopportune, "the fact remained that there was much discontent manifest enough to local officers."

About this time on the retirement of Sir Richard Temple, Sir Ashley Eden* became the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. As

* He had stated in this evidence before the Bengal Indigo Commission as follow :

"My opinion is that in no instance within the last six years at least have ryots entered into any large contracts for cultivation of the crop and that with the exception of factories which have large extent of *chur* lands cultivated, the indigo cultivation is in no instance the result of free agency but that it is compulsory."

Explaining the grounds on which his opinion was formed he stated :

"First, I believe it to be unprofitable and, therefore, I cannot believe that any ryot would consent to take up and cultivation involving as it does serious pecuniary loss to himself. Secondly, it involves an amount of harassing interference to which no free agent would subject himself. Thirdly, from the consideration of the act of violence to which the planters have been complled to resort to keep up the cultivation as proved by the criminal record of Bengal. Fourthly, from the admission of the planters themselves that if the ryots were free agents they would not cultivate

has already been stated above, Sir Ashley Eden had been Magistrate at the time of indigo disturbances in Bengal and was fully acquainted with the activities of planters. He thought that instead of taking action openly which might cause agitation among planters, it would be better to get them to agree to some reforms. He accordingly impressed upon them that the practice of indigo cultivation under the *asamiwar* system was harmful to the interests of tenants, and that they should therefore raise the price of indigo, and that good feelings between the tenants and planters would be restored only if the latter got indigo cultivated on purely business principles. He emphasized the fact that it was not proper for the planters to take forced labour from their tenants.

The planters finding this stiff attitude of the Lieut.-Governor which might be the cause of future troble, established the Bihar Planters' Association which is still in existence. In its very first sittings, the Association decided to enhance the price of indigo from Rs. 9 to Rs. 10/5 per acre. It was also resolved that no rent should be charged from the tenants for the land on which indigo was grown. But it must be said with regard to this last resolution that many did not care to observe it. With regard to other complaints of the tenants the Association passed several resolutions which require to be stated as showing what grievances the tenants then had and that in spite of these resolutions they remained unredressed and were stated before Mr. Gourlay in 1909 and were found to exist in 1917 at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's inquiry. Among the rules then adopted, some of the most important were that the price of indigo should be at the rate of Rs. 9/- per *bigha* measured with a pole of 6½ cubits, that even in the absense of a stipulation to the contrary, the planters could not without the consent of the tenant exchange the indigo land, and that even if the indigo land was changed, the land of one tenant

indigo. Fifthly, the necessity under which the planters state themselves to be of spending large sums in the purchase of Zamindaries and rights of other description giving them territorial influence and powers of compulsion without which they would be unable to procure the cultivation of indigo. Sixthly, the statement of ryots and the people generally in the districts in which I have been. Seventhly, as soon as the ryots became aware of the fact that they were by law practically free agents they at once refused to continue cultivation."

should not be exchanged with that of another, and that if any complaint was made against any member of the Association, the Association should be entitled to inquire thereinto and if that member did not obey its orders, he would be liable to be removed from the Association. After some correspondence with the Government they also made a rule that if a tenant grew indigo on 3 *kathas* for every *bigha* of his holding his rent would not be liable to be enhanced.

When these rules were formed, the Local Government thought the discontent would disappear and it took no further steps. But it was the opinion of Sir Ashley Eden that one of the reasons of the tentants' discontent was the Zamindars used to lease out their villages to planters who thereby gained great power over the tenants and got an opportunity to oppress them. But nothing, however, was done to remedy this; on the other hand, as has already been shown above, the planters managed to make their hold stronger on the Bettiah Raj. On account of the Bettiah Raj being encumbered, a loan of 85 lakhs was raised in England in 1888, and for its repayment a large number of villages was given in perpetual leases to planters. Such leases were granted to 14 factories of which the most important were three, viz., Turkaulia, Peepra and Motihari. Besides, temporary leases continued to be given to the factories. Consequently, although to all outward appearances there was peace, discontent among tenants was smouldering. In 1887 there was a great famine in Bihar and the people in Champaran suffered very much. The planters at that time raised the price of indigo further from Rs. 10/5 to Rs. 12 per acre. But even this did not satisfy the tenants and their discontents found expression from time to time. In 1906 the tenants of Telhara factory murdered its manager, Mr. Bloomfield. Many of them were prosecuted and the Sessions Judge sentenced three of them to death, but on appeal the sentences of death were set aside and they were given six years imprisonment.

5

1907-1909

There is a limit to forbearance. Even an ant, if you tread upon it, opens its small mouth to bite you in revenge. It has been shown in the previous pages that the tenantry of Champaran

thoroughly disliked indigo cultivation. They were daily praying for relief against it. Things went on somehow up to 1907. With the beginning of 1907 signs of discontent began to manifest themselves in the Bettiah subdivision. Some tenants of Sathi factory expressed their unwillingness to grow indigo on the ground that it was unprofitable. On account of heavy flood in 1906 they had lost their paddy crop and they were in pecuniary difficulties. The planters on the other hand were insisting on having indigo grown. These were the causes of the discontent. In March 1907 some tenants had submitted a petition to the Magistrate at Motihari in which they stated among other things—

> "That for six or seven years, the Sathi Factory is oppressing your petitioners in many ways and is exacting from them higher rent and *begar* (forced labour) and forcing your petitioners to cultivate indigo against your petitioners' wishes without adequately paying for them and bringing false criminal cases against your petitioners and other tenants to execute indigo *sattas.*"

When Mr. F.C. Coffin, the manager of the Sathi factory, saw that it was not possible to have indigo cultivation according to old methods, he sought the help of Government officials. Whatever the reasons may have been, some of the tenants were made special constables by the Magistrate so that there might be no breach of the peace. But this did not prevent it. There were several criminal cases in connection with indigo cultivation. In July 1907, there was a criminal case in the villages of the Sathi factory in which one Sundaraman Rai, a *gumasta* (agent) of the factory, charged Foujdar Dube and others with having prevented one Kalicharan Teli from serving in the factory and that they had assaulted factory servants who had gone to fetch him. The defence of the accused persons was that this case had been got up only to coerce them into submission. Mr. E.L. Tanner was the Magistrate of Bettiah at the time and he convicted the accused persons.

On the seventh of August 1907, the tenants of the factory submitted a petition to the Collector of Champaran in which they fully set out their grievances. In it they stated :

> "That instead of growing indigo at three *kathas* per *bigha,* the

facrory introduced a new system. In half the area the factory had compelled your petitioners to grow indigo and in the other half *jai* (oats) and that it allows only Rs. 15 per *bigha* for *jai* although according to out-turn deducting expenses of cultivation, it comes up to almost Rs. 45 per *bigha.*

"That if the total area of indigo and *jai* cultivated by your petitioners does not come to three *kathas* per *bigha*, the factory for balance area realizes paddy at the rate of 25 maunds per *bigha* and if it is not paid in time, its price is realized at the market-rate at the time of realization, and that the factory does not pay any compensation for paddy or its price thus realized. . . . That bullock carts, ploughs and labourers of your petitioners and petitioners themselves are forced to work at ¼ of the ordinary wages and sometimes for nothing."

The finally prayed for inquiry. Mr. T.S. Macpherson, the Magistrate, directed Mr. Tanner to hold the inquiry and in his order said :

"The matters raised are of great importance to the peace of the villages concerned and a shifting inquiry as to the existence of the causes of complaint specified is essential. It should be as wide and undrestricted as possible. I can see that certain persons are ring-leaders, but it does not at all follow that the agitation which is so widespread, is without foundation."

It appears that Mr. Tanner's inquiry did not satisfy the tenants, as Shaikh Gulab, who was considered to be the leader of the tenants, along with other tenants submitted a memorial to the Lieut.-Governor in which he said about this inquiry :

"That the Sub-Divisional Officer of Bettiah went only to three Mouzas and made inquiries of some of your memorialists and then went away leaving the enquiry incomplete."

About the beginning of November, the Sub-Inspector of Police of Lauriya Thana submitted a report to the Magistrate of Bettiah that some tenants were dissuading others from growing indigo and paying rent and that they should be bound down under section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Magistrate took securities

from several tenants for keeping the peace. The poor tenants felt very much oppressed by these proceedings. Many of them even went to jail, many had to furnish security for good behaviour and many were made special constables. A memorial that was submitted to the Lieut.-Governor evoked no satisfactory response. But in spite of all this the tenants did not agree to grow indigo; and ultimately the Sathi factory had to give up indigo cultivation. Thus a heavy load was taken off the shoulders of the tenants.

But it was not to be expected that the factory would take things lying down. It found out another means of realizing money from the tenants, so that the loss of indigo was made up in another way.

In 1980 the Sathi factory had excavated a canal for irrigating its indigo land. It had given an agreement to the Bettiah Raj whereby it had bound itself to maintain this canal and to permit tenants to irrigate their lands by its means without any charge.

So long as the tenants had cultivated indigo they had been permitted to irrigate their lands without any charge. When in 1908 the factory stopped cultivating indigo, it started realizing Rs. 3 per *bigha* from the tenants for supplying water. This tax was named *pain kharcha* (canal tax). The tenants never-freely consented to pay this tax; but the factory got them to execute agreements for it. It is alleged that those tenants who refused to execute agreements were forced to do so. A special Registrar was deputed by the Government to register these agreements. The tenants knew what it meant to raise their heads against the factory; they consequently executed them even against their will. The factory promised in these agreements to supply enough water for irrigation, but this promise remained a promise on paper only. Even tenants, whose fields could never be reached by the water of this canal and who were never benefited thereby, had also to pay this tax of Rs. 3 per *bigha*. At the time of the survey of 1913-15 the tenants of the Sathi factory refused to pay this water tax. The Survey Officers made inquiries and found that this yearly irrigation tax had been realized even from those tenants who had never derived any benefit from the canal. After a shifting inquiry the truth came out and these agreements were cancelled and this tax came to be regarded as an illegal exaction and was stopped. The tenants gratefully accepted this decision and now if the tenant wants to take water from the canal, he gets it after paying for it.

It used to be the practice in the Sathi and some other factories of the Bettiah sub-division to get indigo grown without any written agreement. In 1907-08 the tenants of Sathi factory stopped growing indigo. This news spread to the neighbouring villages also. They also began to stop indigo cultivation. One Shaikh Gulab had taken a prominent part in stopping indigo cultivation in the Sathi villages. His example, put new life into other villagers. Shaikh Gulab had to suffer imprisonment and much pecuniary loss for his activities but he rose very much in the estimation of the villagers. They began to look up to him as their true friend and leader. There was another factory named Parsa factory at a short distance from the Sathi factory. Signs of discontent among the tenants of this factory became visible in September 1908. A big fair is held at Bettiah at the time of *Bijaya Dashami*. People from distant villages visit this fair. The tenants converted this fair into an instrument to propagate their ideas. Shaikh Gulab and one Sitalrai, who was an inhabitant of a village near Parsa began to persuade the tenants not to grow indigo. Some people went so far as to devise means for driving out the planters. On returning home from the fair the tenants began to talk among themselves about these matters and their ideas began to grow. Sitalrai devoted himself heart and soul to the uprooting of the system of indigo cultivation. He used to collect the tenants at night and to preach to them not to grow indigo. The tenants were made to take oath in these meetings. This agitation was, however, confined to the tenants of the factories of Mallahia, Parsa, Baeriya and Kundia. It is said that the tenants had so organized themselves that on hearing a particular singular sound, the tenants of several villages would assemble in no time at a particular place. On the 16th October 1908, the tenants commenced the disturbance openly and a certain peon of the Parsa factory was assaulted. It is alleged that they also attacked the manager of the factory. News of the disturbance was immediately sent to the Government. The Government sent military police to check it. On the 26th October Sitalrai and a wealthy Marwadi, Radhumal, were arrested. People say even now that in those days the military police and the Gorkhas oppressed them very much, and particularly the tenants have not yet forgotten the name of Inspector Knight, nor can they forget those black days. Most of the newspapers commented on those incidents at the time. The *Statesman* of Calcutta deputed a special correspondent

who wrote on the 27th November as follows :

> "A remarkable state of affairs exists at the present moment at Bettiah in the Champaran district in Bihar. Disputes between the planters and the ryots have led to acts of hostility, and in order to protect the European population large forces of Bengal armed police and Gurkhas have been drafted into the town and its neighbourhood. Fifty rounds of ball ammunition have been served out to each member of the Bihar Light House and in parts the division has assumed a perfectly war-like appearance. Seven cases have been reported to the police in which Europeans were attacked. Other stories are current in the neighbourhood of equestrians being ambushed, of frantic rides along jungle paths through crowds of ruffians armed with *lathis* and of inoffensive folk being molested on the high way. Police Inspector Knight was badly mauled by a *badmash* with a *lathi*. Mr. Maxwell Smith, a planter, was chased by a mob and a *tum-tum* belonging to Mr. Moore, Factory Manager, was burnt at Muzaffarpur.
>
> "On Wednesday last nineteen persons were convicted here under section 143 I.P.C. for being members of an unlawful assembly and sentenced, besides graduated fines in each case, to the full term of six months' solitary confinement. There are now no less than 200 prisoners awaiting their trial at Motihari under various charges, chiefly for assaulting Europeans, for arson and under section 505 for inciting class against class. The principal accused in this group is Sitalrai who holds *ryoti* lands under Mr. S.E. Coffin of the Sathi factory in Bettiah Sub-division. Radhumal, a Marwadi banker, and Ramswarath his *gumasta* were arrested recently."

On the 18th November 1908, there was a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council and the Hon. Mr. Duke stated as follows :

> "The attention of the Government has been directed to the disturbances in Champaran ever since they commenced. Its attention was first attracted by the actual occurrence of the breaches of the peace, for no representation had been addressed to it or any of its officers on behalf of the persons who

created the disturbance until breaches of the peace had taken place and the law had been put into motion to repress them. Government is not aware that any persons had to be released in consequence of the absence of its sanction to prosecute them, as sanction was granted in the cases in which it was asked for. It is not possible to answer in further detail at present, but Government has set itself to restore order and repress crime. The neighbourhood is generally quiet and as soon as it is reasonably certain that there will be no further resort to violence, a full enquiry will be made into the causes of the outbreak. An experienced officer has been selected and furnished with full instructions as to the subjects to be examined; but no such enquiry could be undertaken without greater danger to the public peace or usefully conducted so long as the peace of the district continues to be disturbed."

The Magistrate of Bettiah was unable to take up all the prosecutions for trial and the Government deputed a Special Magistate Mr. Goode. There were about fifty cases in which more than 300 persons were convicted. Radhumal admitted his guilt and was let off with a fine of Rs. 3,000. Sitalrai was sentenced to 2½ years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000. The Government further posted an additional punitive police force in these parts which remained there from November 1908 to April 1909. The entire cost of the force was realized from the tenants and it is estimated that this came to about Rs. 30,000.

It has been said above that whenever the tenants of Champaran have tried to free themselves from the miseries of indigo cultivation, the planters have always laid the blame of the agitation among them on the shoulders of outsiders. On this occasion too they tried to do the same by starting the theory that Bengalis had created this ferment among the tenants for political reasons. But this accusation was wholly baseless and the special correspondent of the *Statesman*, reviewing the situation, wrote on the 2nd December 1908 as follows :

"The expediency of a departmental inquiry by the government into the troubles of the planters and the grievances of the ryots will probably have been suggested by my last letter upon the present situation in this subdivision of Champaran. From

enquiries I have made today, it seems that some action of the Government is generally regarded as not only desirable but necessary and as the wish is father to the thought, it is hinted as a possibility that a Commission may be appointed when the Police Court cases are over in order that a thorough investigation may be made. In the meantime, in view of this not unlikely contingency, it is only fair to those who are connected in any way with the case that I should publish the result of my interview with the ryots and so to collate and confront them with the recorded statements of planters.

"At the outset I must record certain alleged acts of reprisal on the part of the factory servants and so-called friendly villages' who, now that they are backed by bayonets and rifles, have, it is said, turned upon the 'enemy' in some parts of the district with retaliatory *lathi* blows. During the riots of the ryots some hard knocks were occasionally given as the evidence shows, and some of those who were knocked in the first place have, it is rumoured, been returning the compliment with compound interest. While walking early this morning through the bazar an individual of the cooly variety came running to me with a lamentable tale of assault and beating committed upon him by a factory peon. He shed more tears in five minutes than I should otherwise have considered possible in the case of a man, and pointing to his body he indicated by weird gesticulations a great weal which clearly indicated the impression of a bound bamboo. I gave him some pice and told him to place his complaint before the Magistrate, and as he received the money with favour and the instructions with disfavour, there it seemed the matter had ended. Upon my return to the place of tents, however, an ox-wagon drew up to my door, and by most pitiful lamentations my attention was drawn to the occupants. What I saw then is common enough to those who have trailed through a campaign, but unless war has actually broken out in this usually peaceful province it was a sight to be wondered at. The wagon contained a party of wounded men. One had a blood-stained bandage round his arm. Another had his jaws tied up in a cloth and upon this there were blood-stains; upon the party generally there were confusions and abrasions. A white-haired person in the group who did all the howling

seemed to have nothing the matter with him at all, however, and it was he who told the story, the truth or falsity of which must be left to another tribunal, as to an alleged assault by factory servants, in the absence of the proprietor, upon his unfortunate companions. If any reliance can be placed upon the garrulous individual in question the planter would be well advised if in future he keeps a sharp eye upon his 'friendlies'.

"I have been requested by some of the planters to deny the statement which has evidently gained some credence, that the reccent agitation was engineered by Bengalee agitators. The observation appeared, I am told, in a certain Calcutta newspaper. One has only to live five minutes in Bettiah to realize the absurdity of the contention made by the correspondent in the present instance, for there is an inherited antipathy, undefined as Indian antipathies are, between Bengalees and Biharees which at once precludes the argument. A Bengalee anarchist would probably get as much chance of a hearing in Bettiah as Moody and Sankey might have done in Mecca. On the other hand, it would, generally speaking, be just as profitable to expound a problem of Euclid or to deliver an exposition upon somatology as to preach politics to the Bettiahis. The existing trouble is purely agrarian. The ryots had held their holdings for generations, they rarely pass beyone the limitations of the farms; they know nothing and care nothing about the hubbub of the outside would; the entire interest of each one of them is centred upon his own individual paddy patch. In the police court evidence it is said that the ryots conspired to 'drive the Sahibs out of the country', but the country in their case means the Bettiah Subdivision, not the Indian Empire, and it is erroneous to suppose that the agitation has anything to do with Bengalee anarchism.

"I interviewed today some persons whose names need not be mentioned, within the *elaka* of a certain factory where the agitation commenced in the first instance. The ryots in this *elaka* have not renewed the *sattas* of their forefathers, and they contend in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, that they are under no obligation to cultivate indigo on their farms for the use of the factories.

THE QUESTION OF COMPULSION

" 'Has any compulsion been made in order to induce you to grow indigo ?' was the first question put to the visitors from Sathi.

" 'Since last year there has been no compulsion,' said one of the men, 'either as regards indigo or any other crop for the benefit of the factory. We have merely to pay Rs. 3 per *bigha* in order to evade the obligation to devote three *kathas* in the *bigha* to indigo cultivation.'

" 'By that payment you acknowledge the existence of some sort of obligation ?'

" 'Yes,' replied the second man, 'under the old *satta* we were paid Rs. 19 per *bigha* for growing indigo. Although we have now no formal *sattas* we have hitherto been growing indigo under the conditions contained in the former contracts. For about twenty-five years we have worked without *sattas*. For the past thirty years no new agreements have been introduced until recently. I have never seen a *satta*. The Sahib was quite willing to go on without them, seeing no necessity for their re-introduction. Last year, however, the Sahib purchased about 400 rupees worth of agreement stamps, and in some places, by force, he compelled the *assamis* to sign new *sattas*. They have since petitioned the Collector stating that they were compelled by the Sahib against their will to subscribe to these new contracts. Under the *sattas* a ryot receives Rs. 15 per *bigha* for oats and Rs. 19 for indigo; but from our own country crops we can make Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per *bigha*. A *bigha* would realize from 60 to 70 maunds of oats, and in the rainy season, when oats (a winter crop) have been harvested, we are able to get a full crop of paddy, which may possibly come to from 60 to 65 maunds, which would realize about Rs. 120.'

" 'What do you mean when you say that your brothers were forced to sign new agreements ?'

" 'They were compelled by the institution of false charges and imprisonment. Last year there were several cases against my relatives and they were bound down to keep the peace.'

" 'Is it not a fact that after the indigo is cut, you are at liberty to grow *rabi* for your own use on the indigo land ?'

" 'We are not allowed to do so. The land must be fallow until the next sowing in order to incereas its productiveness. The introduction of Java seed is an experiment and at present it occupies the ground for three years to the exclusion of country crops. We do not want to grow indigo. As regards sugar-cane, it does not pay us sufficiently to cultivate it for the factories. We can make much bigger profits if we grow crops for ourselves in our own way.'

" 'If that is true, how do you account for so much sugar-cane being sent to a factory by outside ryots, who are under no such compulsion as you suggest ?'

" 'It comes about in this way. The ryots grow cane in order to convert it into golden sugar. They have not the requisite machinery for converting their entire crops and what remains of the cane is sold to the factories. The factories have sufficient lands of their own both for indigo and sugar, and they should, therefore, allow us the freedom of doning as we like.'

" 'You were contented and happy in the past while working for the Sahibs. Why have you changed your attitude so suddenly ?'

" 'At a time when food stuffs were cheap, we were willing to grow indigo. For the last few years, however, there has been draught and scarcity and the prices of cereals have gone up and we can now make larger profits from our own crops. When growing indigo we are enaged in that work throughout the year and our own lands are neglected and we have to pay *bakshees* to the *Sajawal,* the *Tokedar*, and *Ziledar* of the factories; if we do not, they make us do extra work which is objectionable to us and the *dhangars* who did menial work in the past, at 4 as per day, have been sent away and we are compelled to do their task ourselves, at 5 or 6 pice. For these reasons we do not wish to contract with the Sahibs for the cultivation of indigo.' "

After the restoration of peace the Government deputed

Mr. W.R. Gourlay, who was at the time Director of Agriculture and who had also served as the Magistrate of Champaran formerly, to inquire into the grievances of the tenants. He arrived at Bettiah on the 20th December, 1908, and began his enquiries. The tenants of Champaran even now gratefully remember the name of Mr. Gourlay and say that if all the Government Officials were like him, all their miseries would have disappeared long ago. Mr. Gourlay, after a thorough enquiry, submitted a report to the Government. That report is still a sealed book to the public as it was not published. Several times questions were raised in the Bengal and Bihar Councils, particularly by the Hon. Babu Brajakishoreprasad who was a member of the Bengal Council in 1910. But the Government never gave satisfactory replies and flatly refused to publish the report. The Press also severely criticised this action of the Government but to no effect. The result was that the suspicion of the public became deeper that in Mr. Gourlay's report there must be the finding that the tenants' grievances were well founded and that the planters were to blame. The Hon'ble Mr. Maude, while introducing the Champaran Agrariar Bill into the Bihar Council, and as follows regarding this report :

> "The result of that inquiry (Mr. Gourlay's) was a re-statement of all the old grievances which figured in all previous inquiries. Mr. Gourlay found that the cultivation of indigo on the *Asamiwar* system did not pay the ryot, that the ryot had to give up his best land for indigo, that the cultivation required labour which could be more profitably employed elsewhere, and generally that the system was irksome, and led to oppression by the factory servants."

After this report, the Lieut.-Governor, Sir Edward Baker, like Sir Ashley Eden on a previous occasion, explained the situation to the planters and had conferences with them at Darjeeling and Patna in 1909-10. The result of these conferences was that the price of indigo was once again raised by 12½ per cent, and it was decided that the tenants should be made to grow indigo in 2 instead of 3 *kathas* per *bigha* of their holding and they should not be required to raise any crop other than indigo for the factories. It has to be stated with regret that in spite of

this decision, some planters continued to cause tenants to grow in 3 *kathas* instead of 2 *kathas* not only indigo but other crops also, such as, sugar-cane and barley. It must also be added here that after Mr. Gourlay's report, the Government released all those tenants who had been convicted and were in prison. It is the belief of the people that that was also a result of Mr. Gourlay's report.

The tenants of Champaran remained quiet for some time after these incidents. But it should not be inferred from that their grievances had been removed. The oppression of the planters continued as before and the question was discussed from time to time in the Council and in the Press. When the King Emperor and Queen Empress came to India in 1911-12, they visited the Nepal Tarai near Bhikhna Thoree for *shikar*. About 15,000 tenants assembled at Narkatiaganj railway station to lay their grievances before them. The story is that they shouted out their grievances, but on His Majesty's inquiry about the cause of the shout, it was represented to him as an expression of welcome and joy on their part. It is no doubt true that they expressed their joy and welcome but they also represented their grievances. To their misfortune, however, only the former reached the ears of Their Majesties and not the latter. When His Majesty reached Calcutta a number of tenants went there and sent in a memorial to him. This was forwarded under His Majesty's commands to the Government of India for proper action; but it was unfortunately returned to the senders on the 3rd February 1912, by the Government of India for the reason that it had not been submitted through the proper channell The hopes which the poor tenants had formed from Their Majesties' visit were thus dashed to the ground.

In 1913 the *Biharee* which was the principal daily paper of Bihar wrote several articles about Champaran.*

By that time Bihar had been separated from Bengal. Sir Charles Bayley had been appointed Lieut-Governor of Bihar. It appears that the articles in the *Biharee* produced only one result, and that was that Babu Maheshwarprasad, the fearless editor of the paper, was by some under-hand means removed

* See the daily *Biharee* 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 28th September, and 1st, 25th, 26th, and 27th October, 3rd December. 1912 and 11th January, 4th, 22nd and 23rd February, 2nd April and 6th July, 1913.

from the editorship, and the proprietorship of the paper which was formerly owned by a limited company, passed into the hands of a rich Raja, who had held the largest share in the company.

In 1911-12 and 1912-13 the tenants submitted several memorials to the Government, the Collector and other Officials. But so far as is known it does not appear that any action was taken on them which could assure them that there was any one before whom they could lay their grievances. It so happened that in some cases these memorials were forwarded to the very planters against whom complaints had been made in them. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta, commenting on this incident, unearthed an old incident of the Muzaffarpur district in which the Magistrate of Hajipur had referred for report to Mr. Konstam of Singhia Factory a complaint against him and this "My dear Mr. Konstam" practice (of writing demi-official letters) continued in Champaran up to 1911-12 as was shown by the articles in the *Biharee*. In November 1912 Sir Charles Bayley visited the Sonepur fair and there he was received with great eclat by the planters. They presented an address to the Lieut.-Governor in reply to which His Honour said as follows :

> "I need not say how fully I and my colleagues share your hope that the relation of the planting community with the officials, zamindars and ryots will always remain on the present satisfactory footing.

Reviewing this speech of His Honour, the *Indian Planters' Gazette*, which is the organ of the planters, wrote as follows :

> "Peculiarly apposite too at this particular juncture was His Honour's reference to the satisfactory relation between the planting community and the officials, zamindars, and ryots, and we hope that the vivacious editor of the *Biharee*, the erudite author of the articles on the planter and the ryots that have lately filled blank spaces in our Patna contemporary, will digest this public official utterance which so quietly and effectively gives the *Biharee* the lie direct. Our contemporary called upon God and Government to hear while he bore witness to planter oppression and planter extortion. Will the Government at any rate regard his testimony as false ? We hope that our contemporary has

the courage born of convictions, we hope that his editorials were not merely attempts to foment discontant and discord."

It was the misfortune of Champaran tenants that just at a time when they were sending memorial after memorial to the Lient.-Governor detailing their grievances. His Honour thought it fit to give the planters a certificate of character. But it is a law of nature that truth can never be suppressed. Truth always finally conquers. Whatever Sir Charles Baylay may have said in reply to an address of welcome, the whole truth came out in 1917.

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SHARAHBESHI, TAWAN, HARJA

We have now arrived at a period when by their adroitness the planters put a heavy burden on the tenants for ever to carry. Till then the factories used to get indigo grown and whatever of force or oppression there was, was in connection with the cultivation of indigo. But the synthetic dyes of Germany had reduced the price of indigo to a very great extent and indigo cultivation was not as profitable as it used to be formerly. In some places there was actually loss. Many factories were closed in the district of Saran; and so also many of them, stopped work in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Durbhanga, and Monghyr, and those that remained were growing other crops, like other agriculturists, on their land. Champaran was not altogether free from the effect of this competition, and there, too, where in 1892-97 indigo had been grown on an average on 91,000 acres, every year, in 1914 only 8,100 acres were under indigo. The Government made great efforts to save the indigo industry. Many scientists began to investigate the subject, but there was no chance of any profit from indigo cultivation visible. Even indigo grown and manufactured by labour which was not paid for, or if at all at a very low and nominal rate, and which the tenants were compelled to cultivate at a loss to themselves, instead of yielding profit now became a source of loss to the planters. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence ! The tenants saw that what they had not been able

to accomplish by their petitions to the Government and occasional outbursts of violence was now going to happen of itself, and they began to see the dawn of hope for release from indigo oppression. But who knew that behind the rays of dawning light a storm was gathering which for some time at least would overcast the brightness and spread darkness once again ?

The planters saw that they must give up indigo cultivation. The profits that used to be derived from indigo cultivation could not be made from cultivation of ordinary country crops. They had also invested large sums in tools and plants in their factories, and all this would be a dead loss. They would be reduced to the position of ordinary agriculturists. They began to think of means by which all the loss should be transferred from themselves to the tenants, and from 1912 to 1914 they were engaged in this enterprise of transferring the loss that should have been borne by them on to the shoulders of the tenants. They devised various means to accomplish this, and of these *Sharahbeshi*, *Tawan*, *Hunda* and *Harja* deserve special mention.

The land in north-western Champaran is not fit for indigo cultivation. When factories were established in those parts, indigo cultivation was not successful. They used to grow paddy, and in some places sugar-cane and oats; but these were not so profitable, and the great source of their profit was realization of abwabs or illegal cesses. It will be shown later what these abwabs were. Here these factories are mentioned only because it was one of them that discovered a means of making up the loss to it from loss of indigo. There is a factory in these parts at a place called Murla. When this factory saw as early as 1897-98 that there was no hope of profit from indigo in those parts, it began to realize from the tenants a sori of cess as a substitute for indigo cultivation. It was done as follows. A tenant who had to grow indigo in a certain portion of his holding did not do so, as the land was not fit for it. He grew paddy instead. The factory took the paddy grown on the land which would have been under indigo if the soil was suitable, and paid a nominal price for it. In some places instead of paddy, its price was realized. This system is called *hunda*. In effect, it amounts to an enhancement of rent. Take on example. A tenant had a holding of 20 *bighas* and the rent payable for it was Rs. 60 per year. He had to grow under the *tinkathia* system indigo on 3 *katha* per *bigha* of his

holding, that is, in this case on 3 *bighas*; but he grew paddy on these 3 *bighas* also and raised 60 maunds of paddy. The factory would take these 60 maunds of paddy at a nominal price, that is, it would realize besides Rs. 60 the rent legally payable by him, 60 maunds of paddy at a nominal price. When the Government came to know that *hunda* was being realized in this way from the tenants, it declared the *hunda* to be an abwab or illegal cess and ordered that it should not be realized. Perhaps the Murla factory stopped realizing *hunda* under this order but it began to realize *harja* or damages at the rate of Rs. 3 per *bigha* of the holdings of the tenants. The damages were supposed to be in lieu of the release given to tenants from the cultivation of indigo which was never grown there and for which by act of God the soil was utterly unfit. About 1905 the Motihari factory introduced a similar system of release from indigo by realizing *harja*. It began to realize, apart from and over and above the legal rent, about Rs. 2 to 3 per *bigha* from the tenants. When the Government became aware of this, it again considered it illegal and tried to stop it. But the Government was not as impartial on this occasion as it had been on the previous occasion. It notified to those factories which had only temporary short term leases that if they did not stop realizing abwab, their leases regarding Bettiah Raj villages would not be renewed by the Court of Wards. It, however, made an addendum to its notification which deprived it of all its value. Although it had now become clear to every one that on account of the loss involved in the business, the factories were even more anxious than the tenants to get rid of indigo cultivation, the Government added in its notification that if a factory insisted on indigo being grown by a tenant in pursuance of the terms of a contract between the planter and the tenant, and the latter did not wish to grow it, then it would be open to the planter to release the tenant from the obligation on taking damages. No sooner was this declaration made than the planters began to realize damages from the tenants.

It has been shown above that the indigo planters knew that their position was most unsatisfactory. They thought it was not wise to consult the Government often on this matter; and that it was necessary to devise some permanent solution of the difficulty. Readers are aware that in the villages of the Bettiah Raj the planters have acquired two kinds of rights. In some villages they

were *mokarridars*, i.e., perpetual lessees on a fixed rental which is not liable to enhancement. The Raj has no connection or concern with these villages except getting from the lessees the fixed rent, The planters have all the rights of a landlord, i.e., proprietary rights, in those villages subject to the payment of the fixed rent to the Bettiah Raj. If the income from these villages was enhanced, it would go not to the Raj but to the planter, the lessee; and if the income fell, the loss too would fall on the lessee. The Raj would be entitled to get only the fixed rent from the lessee. The other class of villages are those which were leased out by the Raj to the factories for short terms. It is open to the Raj either to resume possession of such villages on expiry of these terms, or to renew their terms to the same lessee or to lease them out to other persons. If the income of these villages is enhanced, the enhancement after the expiry of the term, will go to the Raj which may for this reason resume possession of the villages or resettle them on an enhanced reserved rent with the lessee.

It is necessary to understand the distinction between these two classes of rights, as the planters employed separate devices in the two different classes of villages to realize money from the tenants. The readers must also know one other fact. Bihar which was formerly a part of Bengal, has a tenancy law called the Bengal Tenancy Act. This Act lays down and defines the rights and liabilities of landlords and tenants regarding agricultural lands. According to it there are two classes of tenants—one class having the right of occupancy and the other having no such right. The rent payable by a tenant having the right of occupancy can be euhanced in one of two ways; namely, by contract between the landlord and the tenant or by order of Court. But a landlord's right to enhance the rent by private contract is limited. The reason of the rule is that in the view of the legislature it is not safe to leave the tenant at the mercy of the landlord who could coerce him in various ways to agree to large enhancements. The Bengal Tenancy Act accordingly provides that a contract between landlord and his tenant enhancing the rent by more than 2 annas in the rupee or 12½ p. c. is void. In 1883 when this measure was before the Legislative Council the planters induced the Government to add as one of the exceptions to this rule that if the rent payable by a tenant was lower than the rent usually payable in the locality by reason of the tenant's obligation to grow a particular

crop on his holding for the benefit of the landlord, and if the landlord released the tenant from this obligation, then any contract by which the rent was enhanced even by more than 2 annas in the rupee would be a, valid contract. This was a good weapon in the hands of the planters, and they decided to employ it. Mr. Irwin, the manager of the Motihari factory, took legal opinion on this matter and it is said that Sir Rashbihari Ghose of the Calcutta Bar gave it as his opinion that if the conditions laid down in the section were fulfilled, then the tenant might enter into a valid contract enhancing the rent by more than 2 annas in the rupee. Mr. Irwin represented the matter to the Government. The Government said that inasmuch as it had no materials before it upon which to find that the rent in Champaran was below the usual rate by reason of an obligation on tenants to grow indigo, it would give no opinion in the matter, and the planters might do as they were best advised but that if their action was found to be illegal, the resposibility would be theirs.

When the planters had armed themselves with legal opinion and the Government, too, did not stand in their way, they placed before the tenants a proposal to enhance their rent. It has been pointed out above that if the rent of *mokarri* villages was enhanced, the enhancement would accure to the benefit of the *mokarridar* or the perpetual lessee, i.e., the planter. They, therefore, decided to have enhancements of rent in such *mokarri* villages. Mr. Irwin of the Motihari factory began the work of enhancing rent in 1911-12 by getting contracts executed by tenants. Turkaulia, Peepra, Jalaha, and Shirni factories were not slow to follow the example of the Motihari factory. The planters say that the tenants willingly agreed to the enhancement of their rent, and they gladly accepted to pay Re. 1/10 or Re. 1/12 where they had been paying Re. 1 only. It is urged by them that the tenants were sick of indigo cultivation, and when the planters promised to release them from the obligation to grow indigo, they welcomed the proposal and gratefully accepted the proposed enhancement. The tenants, on the other hand, say that they knew that indigo was now bound to go. It was no longer profitable to the factories. They knew, too, that in the adjoining districts of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga many of the factories had been closed and they were hoping that on account of natural causes these factories would disappear from Champaran

also. They urge that, therefore, when the proposal to enhance rent in lieu of release from indigo cultivation was placed before them, they flatly refused to agree and told the planters that in lieu of release from the dying indigo cultivation they would not put this burden of enhancement of rent on their and their children's heads, and that if it suited the planters, they might insist on the cultivation of indigo. The interests of the planters at this time, however, demand that indigo cultivation should cease and tenants should pay in cash instead. They were not any more prepared to consider the interests of the tenants now than they had ever been before. The tenants assert that all the contract for enhancement of rent which they were supposed to have made were forcibly taken from them. Not one or two but thousands and thousands of tenants solemnly made the assertion before Mahatma Gandhi that they signed or put their thumb impressions on enhancement contracts under complsion after being dishonoured and beaten. Those who had the misfortune or rather the good fortune to hear the statements of these thousands and thousands of the simple tenant of Champaran are firmly of opinion that the tenants never willingly agreed to these enhancements—the opinions of those in authority and the Courts to the contrary notwithstanding. It is, however, true that every tenant was not roughly dealt with, every tenant was not tied to a tree and then beaten with leather straps, every tenant was not shut in a chickenpen or in some dirty place in the factory—peons were not quartered at the house of every tenant, Dhangars (a low class untouchables) may not have been posted obstructing the egress from and ingress into the house of every tenant, every tenant may not have been tied down and thrown in the hot day sun or a heavy load placed on his head or breast—it may be that the services of barber, washerman, carpenter and smith may not have been stopped in the case of every tenant, every tenant may not have been made the victim of a false prosecution in the criminal courts, the roads leading to every village may not have been closed and the grazing lands may not have been closed against the cattle of every tenant; but this much is certain that some of the biggest and most respectable and influential among the tenants were severely dealt with in some one or more of these ways, and their spirit having been crushed, the rest of that and the neighbouring villages were easily coerced into submission. It was only natural that they should submit to what

they considered to be the inevitable.

The reader knows that at that time Sir Charles Bayley was the Lieut.-Governor of Bihar. His policy was peculiar. He paid no heed to the petitions of the tenants; but on the representation of planters he sent special Regitrars to the factories to register the enhancement contracts, so that the planters might be saved the trouble or delay of going to the Registration Office, for their registration. In this way some seventeen special Registration Offices were opened in Champaran and in 1912-14, some 30,710 enhancement contracts were registered. No more effective method than this could have been devised to impress upon the minds of the tenants that the Government was behind the planters in these efforts than this extraordinary procedure of opening special offices for their convenience and it had the desired effect of making them realize that if they created any trouble, they would have the repetition of what they had suffered in 1908-09—when large numbers among them were shoved into jail and special punitive police posted in their villages at their cost. They realized that planter and Government were interchangeable terms and that had no right to expect protection from the one against the other. Had not Sir Charles Bayley made this perfectly clear by giving a certificate of good character to the planters about the end of 1912? To expect anything from him would have been the height of folly and credulity of which even the simple tenants of Champaran were not capable. They submitted to the inevitable.

Whether the enhancements were forced on the tenants or whether they agreed willingly to take this burden on their own head to transmit it to their children and children's children in lieu of an alleged evanescent obligation which was fast disappearing by reason of natural causes, one thing is certain, and that is, that most of tenants of the *mokarri* villages of the Turkaulia, Peepra, Motihari and Jalaha factories did execute such contracts. In the Motihari factory the rent was thus enhanced by Re. 1/10/6 per acre or by 60 p. c.; in Peepra by Re. 0/15 per acre, i.e., by 75 p. c.; in Turkaulia, by Re. 0/15 per acre, i.e., by 50 p. c.: and in Jalaha by Re. 1/3., i.e., by 55 p. c. of the existing rent.*

*Vide letter of Mr. W. S. Irwin dated 16-10-1917 which was published in the *Englishman* of Calcutta and reproduced by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* dated 23-10-1917.

If the average of the entire district is taken , it will be found that the enhancement of rent amounted to 60 p. c. on the existing rental. In spite of the fact that under the law a landlord is not entitled to get an enhancement from his tenant by means of a contract of more than 12½ p. c. on the existing rental, it is said that the tenants willingly agreed to the enhancement of about 60 p. c. The planters on their side agreed to release the tenants from the obligation to grow indigo. We shall see later on how far this promise was kept by them. Suffice it to say here that when the Great War broke out and indigo cultivation once more became profitable the planters did not desist from making the tenants grow it once again. They released in this way about 22,000 acres of land in which tenants had been growing indigo under the *Tinkathia* system from indigo obligation. Mr. Irwin admitted before the Agrarian Commission that the increase in his income from enhancement of rent in his *mokarri* villages amounted to Rs. 50,000 per annum, the capitalized value of which at 20 years' purchase would be no less than Rs. 10,00,000. Mr. Irwin took this enhancement from 41 villages in which there were 41,005 tenants and realized thus Rs. 50,000 per year for five years, i.e., about Rs. 2,50,000 over and above their original rent. Similarly, in Peepra factory enhancement was taken from 8,000 tenants. The rate of rent in the villages of that factory was lower than in other places and the enhancement here was up to 75 p.c. of the existing rental.

I used to be the opinion of Government officials that the tenants of this factor were more contented than those of other factories; but the tenants of this factory created more noise than those of other factories in this matter of enhancements. Many petitions were sent by them to the Government that they were being forced to agree to enhancements. One of such petitions was submitted by one Lomrajsingh to the Commissioner of the Tirhoot Division on the 12th December 1914. This petition was signed by 700 tenants. As a result Mr. E. N. Norman, the Manager of the Peepra factory, prosecuted Lomrajsingh and 14 others for defamation. It was not a civil suit for damages in a Civil Court. Very few of the suits of planters go to the Civil Courts. They find their work easier and more convenient in Criminal Courts—thanks to the system of combining judicial and executive functions in the same officers. Readers can well imagine their reason for

this partiality for criminal courts. The tenants did their best to defend themselves, but Mr. Beal, the Magistrate, convicted them and sentenced them to 6 months' imprisonment and Rs. 24,000 fine. The tenants appealed to the District Judge, Mr. A. E. Scroope, and he set aside the order of the Magistrate and acquitted the accused on the 7th September, 1915. We quote below a portion of Mr. Scroope's judgment which will show with what oppression the enhancement contracts were forced down the throat of the tenants :

> "For the appellants the contention is that the wholesale execution of *kabulyats* was brought about by nothing less than an organized system of oppression by the factory servants, hangers on and *umidwars* who represent the factory in the eyes of the ordinary ryot, and that the chief means resorted to were : (1) stoppage of cultivation till the *kabulyats* were executed, (2) bringing in women to register, whose husbands or male representatives had run away to avoid registering, and (3) criminal cases. Again looking at the probabilities there is no doubt that whilst the intentions of a manager may be one thing, the acts of the factory servants may be, and often are, quite another. It was undoubtedly to the interest of the factory to substitute these new agreements for the obligation to grow indigo. This being so, it is by no means improbable that the factory servants would put pressure on the ryots to come in and execute *kabulyots*. Anyhow taking the evidence as it stands, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that stoppage of cultivation was used by the factory as a means of getting these *kabulyats* executed, and this certainly justified a representation to the Commissioner, as it is hard to imagine a more unfair stimulus to execute a document, and the adjectives used in para 3 of the petition to the Commissioned are not unreasonable epithets to apply to it . . . . Then as regards the allegations about women, the defence puts in *kabulyats* all of which, it is denied by the prosecution, were filled up first in a man's name and eventually registered by a woman . . . Certainly the factor's action in these intances may have been perfectly *bonafide* but the necessity has not been explained for this urgency and for not waiting till the man had made their periodic returns."

In the Turkaulia factory enhancement contracts were taken from 9 to 10 thousand tenants. Some of the tenants of that factory instituted 9 civil suits to set aside their contracts. They were treated as test suits by the factory and fought out with great care by it. Mr. P. C. Manuk, a distinguished advocate of Patna and for sometime the Government Advocate and a Judge of the Patna High Court, was engaged by the factory. The cases went on for a long time. The tenants were of course incapable of coping with a litigation of this protracted nature. The Munsiff in the first Court decided the suits against the tenants, but when the cases went in appeal, Mr. Sheepshanks, the District Judge, held in his judgment dated 15th March 1917, that in 5 out of the 9 test cases, enhancements were illegal as there was no obligation on the tenants to grow indigo. Both parties appealed to the High Court in the suits in which the decisions of Mr. Sheepshanks went against them, and these appeals were dismissed without trial on account of the Champaran Agrarian Act having been passed in the meantime. But the judgment of Mr. Sheepshanks shows this that it was not an easy matter for the factories to prove the obligation on the part of the tenants to grow indigo, and it is no exaggeration to say that no less than 60 p. c. of these contracts for enhancement were illegal and void apart from all considerations of coercion and undue influence.

What happened among the Jalaha factory tenants is worth-knowing, particularly because the then proprietor and manager, Mr. J. V. Jameson, was the representative of the Bihar planters in the Legislative Council and in that capacity he said in the Council that the Champaran Agrarian Committee did not act impartially. Let us see how his factory had behaved.

The factory people saw that there were legal difficulties in the way of getting enhancement agreements from tenants. They saw that if the conditions laid down in the Act were not proved to exist, the enhancement agreements were liable to be set aside at the instance of the tenants. It has already been stated above that a tenant who has acquired right of occupancy is not liable to have his rent enhanced except under certain conditions and to a limited extent. But under the law there is no limit to the right of parties to contract to pay any rent for a land newly settled. The reason of the rule is perfectly clear. If the tenant does not agree to pay the rent demanded by the landlord, the former

cannot force the latter to settle his land with him and must be prepared to go without it; but in case of tenants who are already on the land, the landlord's rights are limited and the tenants cannot be ejected except under very strict conditions laid down in the Act. The Jalaha factory devised a means to get rid of this right of occupancy acquired by the tenants in course of years and make fresh settlements with them which would be free from the obligations laid down on landlords regarding occupancy tenants and which would also not be subject to any limit in the matter of rent. The factory would thus sail clear of all legal difficulties. The only difficulty was how to deprive the tenants of this right of occupancy. It is always open to the tenant to surrender his right and his land to the landlord and to free himself from the liability to pay rent. This rule is laid down for the protection of the tenants, as there may arise cases in which on account of excessive rental or for any other reason it may be necessary for the tenant to free himself from the liability to pay rent. But the framers of the Bengal Tenancy Act could never have imagined that this provision intended for the protection of the tenants could ever be used for the oppression of the tenants of Champaran. The factory told the tenants to surrender their lands, and it is said by the factory that the tenants willingly and gladly surrendered their valuable lands and their valuable rights in them, and again took fresh settlements of these very lands in the names of some relations of theirs on a greatly enhanced rent.

Readers can easily imagine if the planters could force the tenants to execute indigo contracts or to agree to enhancements, there was no particular difficulty in their making their tenants agree to such surrender of their rights. When a suit regarding such surrenders came before the Civil Court, the Munsiff decided that the surrender had been taken forcibly and he held as follows in his judgment dated 30th July, 1917 :

> "Examining the *istifanama* (document of surrender) I find it is on a printed form and it does not bear the signature of Jaldhari. No doubt it bears the thumb impression of one person but it does not mention whose thumb impression it is. Plaintiff had produced the entire *istifa* book before me. I made the *patwari* count all the *istifas* taken from that village in that year, and the witness after counting it page by page

stated that there were 125 tenants in the village and the surrender was taken in that village from not less than 95 tenants of the village. It is the evidence of plaintiff's own witness No. 2 that tenants were not allowed to cultivate their lands unless they paid an enhanced rent at the rate of Re. 1-8-0 per *bigha* and that Jaldhari surrendered the land as plaintiff had enhanced his rent at that rate. If that was the reason for the surrender, I would naturalty expect him not to take land from the plaintiff any more. But he keeps on the same land with this difference that its rent was nearly doubled after this so-called surrender. According to this witness rents of all tenants of the village were enhanced that year save that of four tenants and that saving these four men all the tenants had to surrender their lands.

"The witness could not tell me any reason for this wild epidemic of surrender affecting all tenants of that village in that fateful year 1320 (1912-13 A. C.). Every one knows that by surrender of a holding by a tenants is meant total renouncement of possession on the said land of his. But this is a peculiar kind of surrender in which the tenant Jaldhari surrendered his holding on the 9th April 1913, and that the tenant and his co-tenant took settlement of those very lands the very next day, i.e., on the 10th April. The reason for going through this form of surrender is found in the evidence of the Plaintiff's *patwari*. He says that the rent of tenants was enhanced at the rate of Re. 1-8-0 per *bigha* on the wish of tenants in lieu of not growing indigo. So exemption from liability to grow indigo was the real cause of enhancement of rent and the surrender was not the cause for it, rather it was a convenient means adopted to achieve that by getting over the legal difficulties . . . It is obviously plain that what happened in 1320 was but a paper transaction. Exhibit I, the sham *istifa*, was but an ignominious device employed to evade the provision of section 29 (b) B. T. Act."

Truly there was this "wild epidemic" of surrender of valuable rights. The Jalaha factory in this way got an enhancement of Re. 1-8-0 per *bigha*, i.e., about 55 p.c. on the existing rental. The enhanced rent was realized for three years i.e., from 1913 to 1915. Mr. Jameson thought, however, that in spite of all these

precautions it was safer to take cash in one lump than this enhanced rental to be realized from year to year. He evidently believes in the wise English saying "A bird in hand is worth two in bush." There was no knowing when the tenants would become refractory and carry the matter to Court. He, therefore, proposed to the tenants that he would give up enhancements in lieu of lump sums paid by them. He admitted before the Commission that he had realized Rs. 26,000 from tenants who had agreed to enhancements. He says that, this, too, was paid by the tenants willingly. The tenants had no money even to pay their rents as the crops had partially failed for two seasons successively just before the lump sumps were realized. But in spite of that the very tenants who were unable to pay their rents not only gladly agreed to pay this additional Rs. 26,000 but paid rupees eight to ten thousands in cash, and executed hand notes for the balance.

This sum had been realized from the *mokarri* villages only. Over and above this, like other factories, the Jalaha factory also realized lump sum damages from other temporarily leased villages, and the amount thus realized would not be less than this sum of Rs. 26,000. Thus the tenants of this small factory were mulcted in the shape of consideration for release from enhancements and *tawan* to the extent of Rs. 52,000 between the years 1912 and 1915. We shall refer again to Mr. Jameson's dealings with his tenants and leave him here for the present for fear of digression.

The Jalaha factory adopted this method of circumventing the low. Other factories adopted other methods. In one factory on account of the cessation of indigo cultivation, its own land could not be cultivated to any profit. The factory was anxious to settle it with tenants. It settled small bits of this land with tenants. The rent payable for these bits, however, was not the rent properly and reasonably payable for them but to that was added whatever the factory considered itself entitled to get from the tenant on account of enhancement. The result was that the proxision of the Bengal Tenancy Act restricting enhancement was thus successfully evaded and the rent was enhanced. This system of settlement came locally to be known as *hunda*. To make the position clear, let us take an example. The bit of land newly settled was very small. It is doubtful if any tenant got as much as one *bigha* of land thus newly settled. The rent payable for this additional newly settled land was calculated as follows. We have

already seen that if a tenant had 20 *bighas* of land, he was obliged to grow indigo on 3 *bighas*. If for release from indigo cultivation he had to pay Rs. 1-8-0 per *bigha* as enhancement in his rent, he would have to agree to an enhancement of Rs. 30 per year. Now with this tenant ½ *bigha* of additional land was settled, the rent properly payable for which was say Rs. 5 per year. The rent, however, fixed under the new *hunda* settlement for this ½ *bigha* was not Rs. 5 but Rs. 5 plus Rs. 30 which, if he had agreed to enhancement, he would have to pay. In other words, the rent for that bit of ½ *bigha* was Rs. 35 or at Rs. 70 per *bigha*. Calculated in this way the rent payable per *bigha* in some cases came to as much as Rs. 91-7-3 per *bigha*. In one case it was found that the tenants' rent for his holding of 27 *bighas* was Rs. 59-13-6 while the rent payable for the same quantity of Factory's *Zerait* (own land), if settled, came to Rs. 659-7-0; in the words where the average rent was Rs. 2-3-6 per *bigha*, that for *Zerait* lands came to Rs. 24-6-0, that is, nearly twelve times the prevalent rent. It should be remembered that there was no difference in the quality of the land of the tenants' holding and the factory *Zerait*. In some places this difference in rent was seen in respect of different portions of the same plot. The reson is clear. The rent was not for the land actually settled. It was the enhancement calculated on the basis of the tenants' *tinkathia* liability. I have heard that in some places land which remained under water all the year round in which no crop could ever be raised was settled in this way at high rent. In other cases land which existed only in the imagination of the settler was settled. There was no land in existence which could answer the descriptions given in the settlement lease. The factory was concerned with realizing the enhanced rent. The tenants also knew that they had to pay the enhancement. What did it matter whether it was realized as enhancement pure and simple, or in an indiret manner ? When the revision of Survey and Settlement took place the Settlement Officers recorded these newly settled lands separately as constituting separate holdings in themselves the result of which was that if a tenant wanted to surrender them, he could do so. The factory was of course anxious that this newly settled land and its rent should be amalgamated with the tenants' old holding and its rent. But fortunately for the tenants this was frustrated and the tenants were saved the enhancement. When Mahatma Gandhi came to

Champaran, all these tenants in one voice declared their intention to surrender these *hunda* lands. The factory manager alleged that the *hunda* land was of superior quality, that the tenants had pressed him very much to settle it with them, and that if the tenants surrendered it, he would be able to derive much more profit from the land than he was getting as rent from the tenants. When the tenants heard this they all expressed their willingness to surrender their lands at once, and Mahatma Gandhi putting reliance on the words of the manager took down the names of the tenants who wants to surrender the *hunda* land and forwarded them to the manager. But the very same manager who had boasted that the factory had settled these lands at a loss with the tenants instituted suits for rents from the tenants for these very lands. With all this staring in their face there are people who are never tired of saying that the planters are in Champaran for the good of the tenants there, and whatever agitation or stir there arise among the tenants is artificial and the creation of outsiders without any substance or justification and that the tenants are quite happy under the planters. By these and such other methods the planters managed to shift the loss of indigo on to the shoulders of tenants. But this enhancement was taken in villages which were *mokarri* or in perpetual lease with planters, any increase in the income of which would in perpetuity accrue to the perpetual lessee. In temporarily leased villages, if the rent was enhanced, it would be open to the superior landlord, the Bettiah Raj, either to take these villages back or to enhance the rent payable by the lessee on the expiry of the term of the lease. In such villages therefore, the planters realized lump sums of money from the tenants.

There are many points worth considering in this connection. The planters' allegation was that they were entitled to compel tenants to grow indigo in 3 *kathas* per *bigha* of their holdings. It was a short of personal obligation on the tenants—an obligation of the same nature as that to pay rent. Under the law this obligation could attach only to such holdings as were burdened with it from their very commencement. Obviously it could not attach to holdings which were not so burdened at their commencement. If this obligation did not attach to the holding from its very inception, the provision in law permitting unlimited enhancement would not apply, and a contract for enhancement of rent by

more than 2 annas in the rupee would be legally void. In villages where the planters were the perpetual lessees their rights were practically the same as those of landlords; but this *mokarri* or perpetual right originated only in 1888, and as most of the holdings of tenants were in existence from before 1888, when the planters' right originated, the alleged obligation to grow indigo could not have attached to them, and, therefore, unlimited enhancements, would be illegal and void. But even if on account of their permanent right in the *mokarri* villages, it be admitted that the planters had some sort of a right, it is impossible to understand how they could have any such right in temporarily leased villages in which their own rights were temporary and from which they were themselves liable to be ejected. The Bettiah Raj which was the permanent and superior of the villages never claimed such rights. The planters claimed rights againt tenants which they themselves did not possess. One can understand a tenant contracting to grow indigo for a number of years and refusing to fulfil his promise and being made liable in damages for his breach. The factory would in such a case be entitled to realize damages from him; and if it chose to release him from this obligation, it might claim some compensation for it also. But this can be legal only if the contract between the factory and the tenant is legally valid and duly executed without any undue influence, force, coercion or fraud and after fully understanding the effect thereof. The tenants of Champaran had always asserted that the indigo contracts were forcibly taken from them and if they were left to themselves they would not grow indigo for one single day; not only that, the terms and condition of these contracts used to be such that no man in his senses would ever accept them as a free agent. Besides many of the factories had not even these contracts in their favour, and in many the terms of the contracts had long expired. But the planters realized cash payments as *tawan* or damages from all of them.

Like the rate of enhancement the rate of *tawan* varied in different factories. It was calculated in this way. If a tenant was obliged lo grow indigo in in 3 *bighas*, it was said that his indigo *lagan* was 3 *bighas*. The *tawan* realized was at the rate of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 and in some cases even Rs. 100 per *bigha* of the *lagan*. The average for the whole district would be between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60 per acre. In this why the planters are said to have released

18,000 acres after realizing *tawan* at the rate of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per acre. In other words they realized nine to ten lacs in the shape of *tawan*. The tenants could not of course pay all this in cash. They paid as much as they could in cash, for the rest their cattle were distrained and other properties taken in lieu of cash. Many executed hand notes. The notes which were executed, in many cases did not show that the consideration for them was not cash or did they show that they were in lieu of damages for indigo. In some cases false consideration was mentioned in the bonds, e.g., that the money was borrowed by the tenants for necessary household expenses. Those who had to pay large sums were required to execute not hand notes but registered bonds and in some of them absolutely false necessity for the "loan" was shown, such as, the marriage of a girl or the funeral expenses of an elderly member of the family. The tenants had also in pay interest on the hand notes and the bonds. Mr. Irwin, the manager of the Motihari factory, had admitted that he had realized Rs. 3,20,000 from his tenants as *tawan*, and his rate was Rs. 75 per *bigha*. It has already been stated that Mr. Jameson even in *mokarri* villages realized Rs. 26,000 as *tawan* after having realized enhancement for some years. In his *thika* (temporarily leased) villages he realized *tawan* at Rs. 55 per *bigha*. The indigo *lagan* of his factory was 475 *bighas* and he thus realized Rs. 26,125 as *tawan*, out of which he got about one third in cash and for the balance he took hand notes and bonds. This he did in Jalaha factory. Before coming to Jalaha he was a partner and manager of another factory called Bhelwa Factory. All the villages in possession of that factory had been taken on temporary leases only shortly before that realization of *tawan* commenced. The factory could not by any means force any obligation on the tenants to grow indigo. Mr. Jameson also admitted in his evidence that the indigo obligation could not be proved against the tenants. He had relized Rs. 75 or Rs. 80 per *bigha* all the same, for the tenants of this factory also. The indigo *lagan* of that factory was 1,600 *bighas* and he must have realiazed Rs. 1,20,000 to Rs. 1,28,000. It should also be noted that after realizing this large sum as *tawan* he sold the factory with the result that when in accordance with with recommendations of the Champaran Agrarian Committee the Government ordered a refund by the factories of one fourth of the *tawan* realized by

them, the tenants of the factory did not get any refund, as Mr. Jameson and his partner had departed after realizing the *tawan*, and it was considered unjust by the Government to force the new proprietors to make a refund of what they had not realized.

7

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

It has already been mentioned that in 1912-13 many petitions were submitted by the tenants against the planters. It has also been said how in spite of these petitions Sir Charles Bayley towards the end of 1912 congratulated the planters at Sonepur on the satisfactory relations then subsisting between them and their tenants. But this certificate could not long suppress the truth. When Sir Charles Bayley visited Champaran in the following February, the tenants memorialized him again and we give below three of such petitions.

I

"The humble petition of the undersigned tenants of the village Gawandra, Tappa Harihara, Dist. Champaran,

Most respectifully showeth—

"1. That the petitioners are tenants and *kashtkars* of the village Gawandra which is in lease to the Gawandra Indigo factory.

"2. That hitherto the petitioners were required to cultivate Indigo for the factory at the rate of 3 *kathas* per *bigha* of their holdings and although against their wishes they had accustomed themselves to that service, as any refusal on their part would put them to serious trouble.

"3. That now indigo manufacture has become less lucrative and the factory has thought fit to discontinue cultivation of indigo and has been trying to realize a sum of Rs. 60 on the allegation that the factory would relieve the petitioners from the burden of cultivating indigo.

"4. That indeed the cultivation of indigo is a burden imposed on the tenants without any jusification and the tenants are rightfully entitled to be relieved of that burden

and for the matter of that the factory is not entitled to realize anything from the petitioners.

"5. That in spite of there being no justification the petitioners are being coerced to make payment of the above sum and some of us have been compelled to sign hand notes. The petitioners are terrified.

"6. That the petitioners are quite unable to protect themselves in ordinary course and they feel compelled to represent their grievances to Your Honour in the earnest hope that Your Honour will be graciously pleased to extend protection to your petitioners.

"7. That the petitioners are at Motihari and aspire for an opportunity to appear before Your Honour and to represent their grievances which they are unable to do in writing."

II

"1. We the tenants of *Mouzas* Phenhara, Parsrampur. Rapawlia, Jamunia Nasiba, and Ibrahimpur, Parsawni, Dist. Champaran beg to offer our humble though hearty and loyal welcome to Your Honour on the occasion of Your Honour's graceful visit to the District of Champaran and we take it as a forerunner of peace and cotentment in the district.

"2. Our villages are in lease to the Parsawni Indigo Concern and we have had miserable existence hitherto owing to the high-handedness of the factory with which our lots have been permanently blended. But we believe and trust that our circumstances will henceforth be changed for better on account of Your Honour's happy visit to our dirtrict.

"3. The planters came to the district with a determination to manufacture indigo and our ancestors and ourselves were made to offer ready-made 3 *kathas* per *bigha*, every year of our kast lands for the cultivation of indigo which being absolutely unjustifiable and unconscionable was sought to be legalized by exactions of agreements from the tenants known as *sattas* and as slightest reluctance on our part and on the part of our ancestors would entail our total

annihilation as it were, we persuaded ourselves to be agreeable to our lot to save our honour and existence. But this was not all.

"4. The three *kathas nil-sattas* were followed by a demand of cart *sattas* from us and the unfortunate lot accustomed themselves to the necessary evils in the expectation of enjoying peace. But this was never to happen.

"5. Unfortunately for ourselves the natural indigo lost its value in the market and the factories, at least the majority of them, have given up this idea of cultivating indigo any further and our factory is one of them. But the lull foreboded a destructive storm.

"6. The factory now demands and has been demanding for the last few years an yearly damage of Rs. 16-8-0 or a consolidated damage of Rs. 100 per indigo *bigha* for the apparent return of relieving us from the cultivation of indigo which means an increase of our rents by Rs. 2-4-0 per *bigha* and in the other case our total bankruptcy.

"7. That the demand is more than can be assimilated and we are, therefore, unable and naturally unwilling and reluctant to consent to the payment of the same. But without any consideration of our poor and destitute condition, the factory insists upon the payment of the same by causing oppression of which there are many varieties.

"False cases have been and are being instituted against us, our cattle are taken from our cowsheds to the factory ground to be released only after payment of heavy fines, undue advantages are being taken of petty differences among the ryots themselves, punitive police and police guards were once requisitioned on false allegation of oppression by the ryots to the factory which is simply absurd and impossible; now Dhangars who are known as factory's regiments, would be let on us and many other means would be devised to bring the ryots round.

"8. We petitioned the District Officer representing our grievances and praying for protection. But he declined to take steps on such petition and ordered us to file regular complaints against the factory. We then petitioned to the Comissioner of the division stating our inability to prosecute the powerful factory and praying for our protection. The

Commissioner was pleased to order "Obviously if the tenants will not lay definite complaints nothing can be done, but it appears that the affairs in this *dehat* require to be watched."

"9. The Divisional Commissioner in the last portion of his order has shown some sympathy with us and has been pleased to remark that our affairs required to be watched, but that does not improve our conditions materially. The District Officer is pleased to advise our formally prosecuting the factory but for that we are unable and incompetent. Sometimes complainants against the factory have been prosecuted for false complaints without the same being properly considered with the result that we, ryots are unfairly silenced and compelled to pocket all sorts of injuries and oppressions or to comply with the demands of the factory so hard, unjustifiable and ruinous though they are.

"10. Your Honour's personal presence among us encourages us for presentation of grievances which we hereby do, trusting most sincerely that our evil days will end today and under the protection of Your Honour's benign Government we will be allowed to enjoy peace of mind in our humble hearth, if Your Honour be graciously pleased to order the District Officer to issue instructions to the factory to give up its efforts to realize the illegal demand mentioned above; for which we shall, as in duty bound, ever pray for Your Honour's long life and prosperity."

III

"We the tenants of *Mouza* Madhubani, *thana* Dhaka. Dist. Champaran, beg to offer our humble but hearty and cordial welcome to Your Honour on the occasion of Your Honour's visit to this district.

"We are, Your Honour, yoked to the Nirpur factory which has been demanding an increase of our rent for our holding on the allegation that we will be relieved of the burden of cultivating indigo for the said factory. The cultivation of indigo is indeed a burden and the sooner we are relieved of it, the better in the name of British Justice. But the demand for any addition to our rental is to drive us

to the fire from the frying pan and we are naturally reluctant to comply with the new demand of the factory.

"But, however, justified are reluctance might be the factory is not prepared to put up with it and various sorts of threats are being held out to us by the *amlas* and the creatures of the factory and our very existence is in danger and to safeguard ourselves we filed a petition before the District Officer stating the various threats held out to us as we necessarily thought ourselves to be quite unable to stand the wrath of the factory which is so fearful. The result of our petition to the District Magistrate has been that cases under section 500 I.P.C., have been started and as Your Honour might well conceive, we are quite unable to substantiale the allegation in the petition to the District Officer before the trying Magistrate in opposition to such a strong body is the factory; although our allegations are true to the letter and in one set of cases some of us have been convicted and other sets are still pending judgment and trial; but the result of these cases, as well, are a foregone conclusion under the circumstances we are surrounded by.

"It is argued that tenants are voluntarily entering into agreements for the increase of their rents, but slightly independent and unbiased judgment will establish that any such agreement on the part of the ryots cannot but be the offspring of force and coercion and the cultivation of indigo was nothing better.

"We are informed that a special Registering office has been opened and we apprehend that our annihilation is near at hand as the establishment of such an office will expedite greatly the registration and completion of that undesirable agreemrnt for the increase of the ryot's rents."

It is clear from these petitions that the complaint of the tenants was that force and coercion were used in getting enhancement contracts from them. We do not known what action was taken on these petitions. In answer to a question by the Hon'ble Babu Brajkishoreprasad in the Legislative Council, the Hon'ble Mr. MacPherson said as follows :

"Government has received from time to time petitions

purporting to be signed by the ryots of Champaran and complaining of the relations existing between them and the landlords. The petitions have been referred to the local officers for inquiry but reports have not been received in all cases. In certain cases, the local officers have taken steps to redress the grievances which have been proved to be well founded. The complete report of the local officers is still awaited and in view of the imminence of the revision of settlement operation in the district which will bring to light all the facts of the situation, Government do not consider that any Committee of inquiry is now necessary or expendient.''

About this time these enhancement contracts were being executed and *tawan* was being realized. The Press was also commenting on this. On the 6th July 1913 the *Biharee* wrote a strong article* on the subject. But in spite of all this Lord Hardinge

* "The failure of natural indigo to successfully compete with the artificial dye has seriously affected the financial position of the planting community in the Tirhut division of our province and the loss thus entailed on them has affected to a large extent their relation with the tenants. We have referred to the evils of the *tinkathia* system, and how their attempt to realize *tawan* (compensation) or *sharahbeshi* (enhancement of rent) for releasing the tenants from their obligation to grow indigo on three *kathas* out of every *bigha* of their holdings has created a situation which deserves the serious attention of the Local Government. Villages in which indigo is or was grown are held either in *thica* or *mokarri*. In the former, cash compensation is being demanded which ranges from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 per indigo *bigha*; in the latter, enhancement of rent, as would permanently raise the income. Instances have come to light in which coercion is employed to make the tenants agree either to the enhancement of the rent or pay the cash compensation. Some of those who do not agree are harassed in various ways, till they agree to the terms imposed by the Saheb. Numerous petitions, we understand, were filed before the District Magistrate, the burden of the song in each case being 'that the tenants were not lodging formal complaints against the factories but only laying their petitions for their protection so that, they might be of use in future and in the hope that the Magistrate would use his influence with the planters.'

"And be it said to the credit of the present District Magistrate of Champaran that he has on several occasions while sending copies of such petitions to the factory managers for information, made it perfectly clear that no ryot can be compelled to pay compensation in lieu of indigo against his will, that no sort of pressure can be used to compel him. He has further added that if the ryot has executed an Indigo *sattah* he is

was also made to grant a certificate to the planters. When Lord Hardinge visited Patna towards the end of 1913 to lay the

bound to grow indigo, and if he refuses or neglects to do so, damages can be realized by civil suit. But the payment of compensation in lieu of indigo is absolutely at the option of the ryot. Such a clear and unambiguous expression of the views which the District Magistrate entertains on the question of compensation has been a source of relief to the poor tenants. It is, however, a well-known fact that the factory managers and the European *thikadars* had been practising a sort of benevolent despotism. But it was despotism after all. The principal source profit having almost disappeared, there has been more of despotism than of benevolence and it behoves the Government to come to the relief of the poor cultivators, for these latter in their struggle with the powerful organization of the planters and *thikadars*, a very influential body certainly, have to face fearful odds. Sometimes petitions are submitted to the District Magistrate on which it is not possible for him to take any action. For instance, in one petition, the magistrate passed the following order :— 'The petition does not show to what public officer it is addressed. If it is addressed to the District Magistrate, it is for the petitioners to state what action they desire the District Magistrate to take and under what law. If it is intended for the Collector, I do not in the least understand what power of interference the Collector has. The petition is therefore returned to the *mukhtear* so that he may make the petition clear.' We can very well understand the difficulties of the executive head of the District, but there are various ways in which he might take action and we might be permitted to humbly suggest to him that as the head of the police, he might see that they are less subservient to the wishes of the factory managers. Police guards are placed in villages where inhabitants are said to have gone out of the hand of the factory, and the oppessions the members of this force are said to practice might well be put a stop to, and in all cases in which the District Magistrate is satisfied that wrong is being done, although he migh not be able to employ the provisions of any law to punish the wrong doers, he might use moral suasion, and we are sure this will have the desired effect. Only very recently a case under section 107 Cr. P.C. was tried by the Deputy Magistrate of Motihari exercising first class powers, in which 9 persons were accused of interfering with the cultivation of *gairmazua* land belonging to the Barah factory and its outwork Gawandra factory threatening to commit violence on the servants and those of their tenants who have paid indigo compensation known as *tawan*. The case for the defence was that the said factories were demanding *tawan* from the accused and other people and are coercing them to pay by various acts of oppression and that this case has been instituted by the police at their instigation with a view to put pressure on them so that they may be compelled to pay it, and there is no apprehension of a breach of the peace on their part. Now the Magistrate who tried the case in the course of his judgment says : 'I have made a local inspection of the land and compared the cadatstral

foundation stone of the Patna High Court, the panters presented an address to him in reply to which he was made to say :

Survey No. 1310 *Mahal* and *Mouzah* Gawandra Tola Sherpore, and it is entered in the *Khatian* as *Gair-Mazrua Rasta* (*Road*) *Chak Pokhta ek ba Kabza Malik* and it is also shown in the cadastral map as a road. I have seen several other lands. Plot No. 1681 *Mahal* and *Mouzah* Gawandra, Tola Ramdiha and 1275 which the factories have due up in order to cultivate them, and these lands are also shown in the cadastral survey *khatian* and map as road. It will therefore, be seen that what the factories are anxious to cultivate are *Gairmazrua* roads that is, public roads which have been used by the people as such for many years, perhaps many decades and that it has now suddenly entered their heads to big up and cultivate them-and thus stop the right of way of other people. I may say at once that the factory is not entitled to dig up, cultivate and grow crops on these roads and thus stop the traffic altogether. The chief people that are affected by this are the accused and others that have not paid the compensation or *tawan* and who have got their houses, *goushalas, khali-hans, nads* etc., near them. What the factories have done is absolutely a wrongful act which is likely to provoke a breach of the peace and for which they want others to be bound down. The accused, in my opinion, were perfectly justified in resisting in the way they are alleged to have done, the cultivation of these roads by which the right of way would be stopped. I can understand no other motive on the part of the factory of selecting these roads to be cultivated first before other fallow lands (which are many) than the intention of making the existence of these accused and others that have not agreed to pay Indigo *tawan* intolerable in the village. It is a piece of extreme high-handedness on the part of the factories, to say the least of it.' In the end the Magistrate came to the conclusion, 'that the factory people have dug up the roads to grow crops thereon with a view to stop the way of the accused and others who have not paid the *tawan* in order to coerce them to submit to the factory terms and this is in my opinion at once unjust and unlawful and that it is they who are provoking a breach of the peace. It is the factory servants who are doing a wrongful act and who ought to be bound down and not the accused. If any breach of the peace occurs I would hold them responsible and not the accused. I accordingly discharge the accused under section 119 Cr. P.C.' Any one who has any experience of Zamindari work will agree with us when we say that it is an ordinary practice to coerce the refractory tenants in this fashion As the trying Magistrate found there was no other object in selecting the roads to be dug up for cultivation, roads which have been used as such for years, which were shown as roads in survey maps except that of coercion, specially when it is pointed out that there are other fallow lands which were not sought to be cultivated. And the first effort to cultivate was made in connection with the roads where cultivation would seriously affect the accused and others who had not paid the compensation or *tawan*. Comment is superfluous and would be nothing better than an act of supererogation."

"as far as I know, the relations between the Bihar planters and their ryots are cordial and satisfactiory in the North Bihar Districts."

In 1914 the Bihar Provincial Conference met at Bankipur on the 10th April. Babu Brajkishoreprasad presided over it and in his Presidential Address he said about Champaran as follows :

> "The highest officials in the land have utilized their replies to the addresses of welcome from the planting community to bestow upon them glowing panegyrics on the valuable services they are said to have rendered to Tirhut. I do not grudge the planters these eulogiums and I wish them joy. But I do maintain that there is another side of the shield and whatever good the planters might have done, their dealings with ryots have brought about a serious agrarian situation and that they have resulted in considerable suffering and misery to the poor defenceless villagers. It is well known that the ryots' allegations against the planters which have been held by Courts to be generally well founded are to the effect that they are found to execute illegal *sattas* by methods of coercion, including the institution of vexatious cases, that fines and cesses are unlawfully realized from them and that they are ill-treated if they attempt in the least to refuse compliance with the orders of the planters. So far as the execution of the *sattas* is concerned. It is strange that registration offices are opened at factories to suit the convenience of the planters. These allegations are serious enough in all conscience to merit a thorough and sifting inquiry in the interest not only of the ryots but the planters as well . . . . In my opinion the Government will be well advised if, far from blinking so serious a problem, they tackle it in the only way possible, namely, by appointing a small mixed Committee of qualified officials and non-officials to thoroughly investigate the matter by means of an open enquiry and by acting upon its recommendations. Otherwise, I may warn the Government that there are rocks ahead and that they had better look out."

The Provincial Conference passed a resolution recommending to the Government the appointment of an enquiry Committee. No heed was of course paid to this. *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika* and

the Bharatamitra of Calcutta, *the Pratap* of Cawnpore and *the Abhyudaya,* of Allahabad, went on writing about Champaran from time to time and Babu Brajkishoreprasad by his questions in the Council continued drawing the attention of the Government to these articles and warning the Government about the danger of overlooking the real causes of discontent in Champaran. On the 3rd April 1915, the Provincial Conference met at Chapra. Babu Nandkishorelal presided, and commenting on the Champaran situation, he said as follows :

"I gathear that in the twelve months that have elapsed since we met last, all has not been well with the relations between the two communities (planters and ryots). The ryots have presented petitions to the Government making very serious allegations against some of the managers of the Indigo concerns and the official reply in the Council was that the Government had 'forwarded them in original through the proper official channel for report'. This is gratifying; but one would like to know soon the result of the inquiries, or are they also to share the fate of Mr. Gourlay's Report submitted in connection with the Champaran riot of 1908 and which is popularly believed and perhaps not unjustifiably to the planters of repeated demands in the Imperial and Provincial Councils for its publication."

He, too, like Babu Brajkishoreprasad suggested to the appointment of an enquiry Committee. In this conference also a resolution recommending such a Committee was again passed and it is worth nothing that Pandit Rajkumar Shukla about whom we shall have to say a great deal later on, accompanied by many others attended this Conference as a representative of the tenants and related the story of their grievances before the Conference. The Legislative Council met in that very month and Babu Brajkishoreprasad proposed the following resolution at the meeting :

"That this Council recommends to the Lieut.-Governor in Council that a Committee of qualified officials and non-officials be appointed to make an immediate and searching inquiry into the case of the strained relations between the planters and the ryots in the District of Champaran and to suggest remedies therefor."

It need hardly be stated that the Government of Sir Charles Bayley did not accept this resolution. In reply it was said that the Government from time to time had had inquiries made by local officers and at the time the survey and settlement of the District was going on, and whatever grievances the tenants might have would be placed before the Settlement Officer whose report would doubtless be authoritative. The representative of the planters in the Council and the Secretary of the Planters' Association Mr. Filgate quoted the encomiums bestowed on them by Lord Hardinge and said that the relation between the planters and the tenants was quite satisfactory and no inquiry was needed. Babu Brajkishoreprasad quoted the following from the *Indian Planters' Gazette*, the organ of the planters, in reply :

> "It seems certain that bad feeling has been brewing for some time between certain of the European Zamindaries at Champaran and their tenancy and that very shortly after he was appointed District Officer, Mr. Heycock found it necessary to circulate a notice amongst ryots with a view to reassure them."

No one can blame Mr. Filgate for the defence he put forward on behalf of those whose representative he was in the Council; but it must be admitted with regret that other non-official members also in a way opposed this resolution. Some of the non-official members who knew nothing about Champaran had the temerity to advise Babu Brajkishoreprasad to withdraw the resolution. But the latter who knew a great deal about Champaran did not of course listen to this advice. He only said in reply that if the Government gave a pledge to publish the report of the enquiry which was then alleged to be made by the Settlement Officers, he might withdraw his resolution. But Sir Charles Bayley's Government did not agree even to this. It was obvious that the report might go against the planters and the certificate granted by Sir Charles might be proved false by his own officers. If the Government had accepted Babu Brajkishoreprasad's suggestion for the appointment of an Enquiry Committee in 1913, the *tawan* would not have been realized; and both the tenants and the Bettiah Raj would have been saved this heavy fine. The Government, too, would not have had to eat the humble pie and Mahatma Gandhi would not have had to take the trouble he

had to. But whatever God does. He does for the best. Possibly the enquiry and the report of the Committee if then appointed, would not have been as through as they were under the Champaran Agrarian Committee of 1917, and the tenants would not have been freed from the burden of *tinkathia.* India, too, would have been deprived of the first fruit of Satyagraha, and the residents of Bihar could not have seen the burning example of the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi for the good of the tenantry of Champaran.

8

ABWAB

It has been said above that the soil of north-western Champaran is not fit for indigo cultivation which was never carried on in a regular way in that part : but it should not be supposed that Europeans did not establish factories there. They used to take leases of villages from the Bettiah and Ramanagar Estates and used to make their living out of them. It does not follow from this that their tenants were happy and contented. They had devised other means of making money. We have already seen how in 1907 the Sathi factory had found a substitute for indigo in *painkharcha* or water tax. Other factories also, some of which did not have indigo cultivation and some that had it, used to realize various kinds of abwab or illegal cesses. *Painkharcha* was one such abwab. It was said by factory owners that Indian Zamindars had from time immemorial realized various kinds of abwabs and that the planters had only followed their example. They also alleged that the tenants willingly paid these illegal cesses which were equel in amount to the legal rent payable by them. With regard to the villages of the Ramanagar Raj, it is said that the rent on which they had been leased to the planters includes abwab. Even since the Permanent Settlement was made in 1793, abwabs have been declared illegal and they have been prohibited by the Government. The Bengal Tenancy Act also prohibits the realization of abwab and prescribes a penalty against a landlord who realizes it to the extent of double the amount realized to be paid to the tenant.

Abwabs are of many kinds. Their names and made of

realization would excite laughter, if one forgot that they were the cause of untold misery to the tenant. Some of these are described below, as their mere names may not be intelligible.

(1) *Painkharcha*—means a tax or rate paid for water supplied by means of a canal for irrigation. If there were really *pains* in existence, and the tenants benefited by them by irrigating their lands with the canal water on one would object to this rate being realized. The tenants not only in Bihar but in other provinces also pay canal rates to the Government for irrigating their lands with water from Government canals; and no one raises any objection to such rates. But in Champaran this *painkharcha* was an abwab. The Sathi factory used to realize it without making any satisfactory arrangement for the supply of water. In other factories also it used to be similarly realized without any justification. In all these places the rate was Rs. 3 per *bigha*. There is a factory called Chautarwa in north-west Champaran. There are many "Dhangar"* tenants. Land is not settled there by measurement. The rent is not paid at so much per acre but so much per plough, that is, so much for as much land as can be cultivated with one plough. The system is known as *halband*. The Dhangar tenants used to pay Rs. 7-8-0 per plough and rent and an equal amount was realized as *painkharcha* from them. There is another factory called Madhubani which is owned by the same proprietor as Chautarwa. There is an embankment called the Piprasi Embankment. It is alleged by the factory that this embankment was made at the cost of the factory, and it is also maintained by it, and it is accordingly entitled to realize *painkharcha*, or water-rate from the tenants. No one knows what its construction cost the factory, but its upkeep does not cost more than Rs. 300 per year. The income of the factory from *painkharcha*, and an embankment cess was as much as Rs. 9,000 per year. The tenants say that the embankment was made by the Dhangars without their charging any wages from the factory ! Similarly, the Belwa and Naraipur factories used to realize *painkrarcha*, and their allegation too, was that they had constructed canals for the benefit of tenants. The settlement officers of the Government could not discover these canals, and

* "Dhangars" are a class of aborigines imported from Chotanagpur and settled in Champaran.

even where they were found, only a small portion of the lands on which *painkharcha*, was levied was benefited by them. The Bhusurari factory frankly confessed that it had no canals but it realized the *painkharcha* all the same !

Let us have the story of another factory. Its name is Sikta. The proprietor was one Mr. Thorpe. He saw that *painkharcha* might be declared an abwab and its realization stopped. He thought it safer and wiser to realize a lump sum instead. He accordingly tried to realize 6 years' *painkharcha* in one sum and succeeded in realizing it, too, from some of the tenants, but many did not pay. In the meantime the settlement officers arrived and the whole show was over. A large sum was due from this very Mr. Thorpe on account of rent to the Bettiah Raj, and the Court of Wards remitted Rs. 80,000 at one stroke for his, it would seem, invaluable services !

(2-4) *Salami*, *Tinkathia* and *Lagan*, are various names for for Rs. 3 per *bigha* that used to be realized over and above the rent. That it should be called *tinkathia* is very significant. It does not prove that indigo used to be grown in north-western Champaran also under the *tinkathia* system. But tenants felt that as in eastern and southern Champaran their compatriots had to bear the burden of indigo, so also should they bear the burden of this abwab. This is well illustrated in Bhusurari factory. The factory started by realizing 3 maunds of paddy per *bigha* which it later on commuted into a cash payment of Rs. 3 per *bigha*. In the Murla and Hardia factories also this abwab was realized in this way. The tenants naturally thought that whether it was for indigo or as abwab, they had to pay to the European Planter, and it made no difference to them by what name others called it—whether *panikharcha*, *tihkathia*, *lagan* or *salami*.

(5) *Bandhbehri*—is an abwab like *painkharcha*; its rate is one anna per rupee of the rent.

(6) *Bethmafi*—We have already mentioned that in Chautarwa factory Rs. 7-8-0 used to be the rent and Rs. 7-8-0 abwab per plough. *Bethmafi* also used to be realized by that factory. The factory had some lands which used to be cultivated with the help of the ploughs of the tenants. It is said that it was very irksome to the tenants to supply their ploughs to the factory and they gladly commuted this obligation into money payment at the rate of Rs. 3 per plaugh. This was called *bethmafi*, i.e., an abwab

paid in lieu of *beth*. The poor tenants of that factory had thus to pay over and above their legal rent of Rs. 7-8-0 per plough, an additional Rs. 7-8-0 as *painkharcha* and Rs. 3 as *bethmafi* per plough.

(7) *Bapahi-Putahi*—When a tenant dies his son or heir has to pay a sort of death duty which is known by this name. It should be noted, however, that under the Bengal Tenancy Act the right of an occupancy tenant is heritable without any such payment but the planters would not allow the heir his legal right without this payment.

(8) *Marwach*—is a tax of Re. 1-4-0 realized at the time of the marriage of a tenant's child.

(9) *Sagaura*—was a tax of Rs. 5 realized at the time of a re-marriage of a widow.

(10) *Kolhu-awan*—was a text of Re. 1 realized for every oil or sugarcane mill.

(11) *Chulhi-awan*—In some placed turmeric is cultivated in large quantities and before being placed in the market, it has to be boiled. This was a tax of Re. 1 for every oven kept for boiling turmeric.

(12) *Batchhapi*—was a tax realized from sellers of oil and milk, and the rate was Re. 1 for every pail kept by the seller.

(13) *Bechai*—used to be realized from those who sold grain and the rate was Re. 1 or Rs. 2 per year.

(14) *Phaguahi*, (15) *Dasahari*, (16) *Chaitnawami*. (17) *Dawatpuja* used to be kinds of cesses realized by the planters on their employees from the tenants on the occasions of Hindu festivals of Phagua or Holi, Dasahra, Chaitnawami and Dawatpuja. It is said that some factories used to give dancing parties on the occasion of the *holi* festival. The factory employees used to enjoy the dancing and the tenants were also invited. But whether they came or not they had to pay Re. 1 each.

(18) *Hathiahi*—There are jungles in north-western Champaran. Planters and other Europeans often go there for *shikar*. Elephants were required for these *shikars* and the planters have, therefore, to keep elephants. When they wanted to purchase elephants, the tenants had to raise money from among themselves under the name of *Hathiahi*, i.e., a tax for an elephant.

(19) *Ghorahi*, (20) *Motorahi* or *Hawahi*. (21) *Nawahi*—used to be similar exactions to enable the planter to purchase a horse, a

motor car or a boat.

(22) *Ghawahi*—If the planter fell ill, his loyal tenant, had to find the money for his treatment. It is said of one planter that he had a sore which required operation and treatment for a pretty long time. This involved much expense which was realized from tenants under the name of Ghawahi, i.e., a tax to meet the expenses of the treatment for a sore.

(23) *Amahi*, (24) *Katahalahi*, —When there was a bumper crop of mangoes and jack fruits, the factory ordered the mangoes and jack fruits to be distributed among tenants. If any one had the temerity to refuse this favour, he incurred the wrath of the Sahib. But the mangoes were soon followed by the factory peon to realize their price. The price was, however, not settled according to the market rate but varied with the capacity of the tenant to pay.

(25) *Amadi Salami*—If the planter or any big officer of the factory visited a village, the tenants must of course appear before him to pay his respects to him. But how could that be done empty-handed ? Therefore, even if a tenant did not care to present himself but deposited Re. 1 with the factory servant, all would be well with him; otherwise he was taught a lesson in manners.

(26) *Rasidawan*—was paid to the village officer at the rate of one anna per every receipt he issued for rent realized from the tenants.

(27) *Farkhawan*—was a similar tax to be paid by the tenant for an acquittance receipt granted at the close of the year as proof of the payment of the rent for the year in full. Its rate varied from 8 annas to one rupee for every tenant.

(28) *Dasturi*, (29) *Hisabana*, (30) *Tahrir*, (31) *Dewan dasturi*—used to be various kinds of cesses realized from the tenants at the rate of 6 pies to one anna per rupee of their rent. The amount realized under this used ordinarily to go to the pockets of the factory took hold of this also.

(32) *Bisahi*, *Pandrahi*, *Dasahi*—It has been pointed out already that the Sikta factory, some time before the settlement proceedings, tried to compound the abwab by realizing it for several years in one lump. It is said by the tenants that in Chautarwa factory abwab was realized for 20, 15 or 10 years in one lump sum. Those tenants who could not pay in cash had to execute hand notes as was done in the case of *tawan*. It was realized on the pretext of releasing the tenants from the obligation to pay

abwab just as *tawan* had been realized on the pretext of releasing them from the obligation to grow indigo.

There were several other kinds of abwabs, e.g , (33) *Mahapatri*, (34) *Raj-ank*, (35) *Mukhdekhi*, (36) *Diwanbheti*, (37) *Gurubheti*, (38) *Jangla isimnavisi*, (39) *Dahicheoraha*, (40) *Jamunahi*, etc.

These were all abwabs. But apart from these all the planters, whether they were actual planters as in eastern or southern Champaran or only lessees as in northwestern Champaran, used to realize fines. Many of the planters admitted this before the Agrarian Commission, but said that only small amounts used to be realized and out of the sum realized a part was kept by the factory and a part paid to the complainant as damages.

The tenants mentioned a punishment with a peculiar name. If a woman goes wrong with a man, the latter, if discovered, is punished. This punishment is called *Singarhat*. It is said that this is prevalent in Nepal also. The factories used to realize decent amounts under this head of *singarhat*. From the names of abwabs mentioned above it is clear that the planters know how to extract money from tenants on some pretext or other. But it will not be right to think that every tenant had to pay each and every kind of abwab every year. Some of these were doubtless realized every year—some on special occasions and some from particular tenants. It is the opinion of the Settlement Officer that the incidence of abwab was equal to the legal rent, that is, every tenant had to pay double the amount he was legally liable to pay.

The planters say that these abwabs have come down from time immemorial, and that the leases to them are on a system of rackrenting leaving no margin of profit to them unless they realize abwab. They also say that in some cases the rent payable by them from their leasehold exceeds that realizable by them from the tenants and in some cases abwabs are actually mentioned in their leases. How then, they argue, can they do without realizing these abwabs ? Mr. Ammon, the Manager of the Belwa Factory, and who has the reputation of being a *zabardast* planter, said in his evidence in defence of abwab before the Commission—"Is the *thikedar* to blame for collecting these abwabs, for the *thikedar* is paid to squeeze and must squeeze to pay." It is, however, not true to say that the leases would not be profitable without these abwabs.

Mr. J.A. Sweeney, the Settlement Officer, proved this fact

before the Commission regarding the Bettiah and Ramnagar leases. The Bettiah Raj pays 10 p.c. as commission to lessees. As regards the Ramnagar Raj villages, he showed by calculation that for 79 villages which were in lease the lessee had to pay Rs. 40,809 as rent to the Raj, but that he was entitled to realize only 40,547 as rent from the tenants, that is, less than what he had to pay. But if the income derived from the *bakasht* and *hunda* lands be added to the rent realizable, then the total income would come to Rs. 70,700, that is a clear profit of Rs. 30,000 which works out at the rate of 75 p.c. as commission for collecting the rent from the tenants. The readers should remember that apart from this the lessee realized abwab which also was equal to the legal rent, that is 40,000. It should, however, be added that the lessee had to pay a heavy premium at the commencement of the lease, but that of course is nothing when compared with 75 p.c. for collection charges and the 100 p.c. abwab on the legal rental.

The tenants had sent petitions to the Government and Government officials about these abwabs and when Badu Brajkishoreprasad moved a resolution in the Legislative Council for the appointment of an Enquiry Committtee, the Hon'ble Mr. Levinge, who spoke on behalf of the Government, pointed out that Babu Brajkishore had made a mistake in treating all Europeans in Champaran as planters, whereas many of them had never cultivated or manufactured indigo at all. He also stated that the petitions of the tenants from the northwestern portion of Champaran were not about indigo but about abwab, and therefore they furnished no ground for holding and enquiry so far as the indigo planters properly socalled were concerned. He further stated that these petitions about abwab had been forwarded to local officers for inquiry. No doubt this criticism of the Hon'ble Mr. Levinge was literally true, but the fact remains that the tenants of Champaran do not make any distinction between an indigo planter and an European who extracts abwab from them. To them both represent one and the same thing—a money extracting agency.

The District Collector held enquiries on the basis of these petitions and as a result issued a notice on the 18th May 1914, to the effect that with regard to the complaints of the tenants that the Chautrawa Factory was demanding Rs. 15 per *bigha*, the factory had assured him that this demand was not made and

that the tenants should not pay it, even if the demand was made. The tenants of Belwa, Sikta Chautrawa, Madhubani and Naraipur went on submitting such petitions complaining about abwab to the Collector, the Commissioner and the Lieut.-Governor of the Province. But this grievance was not fully dealt with until the Settlement Proceedings when Mr. Sweeney after a thorough enquiry submitted a report in June, 1915. The complaints of the tenants were mostly found by him to be true in this report, and orders were issued to stop realization of abwabs. In the villages of the Bettiah Raj collection of abwab was stopped after the issue of these orders, but it continued in the villages of the Ramnagar Raj.

9

SURVEY AND SETTLEMENT

The readers will remember that Babu Brajakishoreprasad had proposed the appointment of a Committee to inquire into relations between the planters and their tenants. The Hon'ble Mr. Levinge had in reply said that such a Committee was unnecessary as the Government had deputed officers for a revisional survey and settlement of the District and that these officers would listen to and inquire into the grievances of the tenants, and that the Government would take such action as was deemed necessary on the receipt of the report of the Settlement Officer. This work of Revisional Survey and Settlement started in Champaran in 1913.

The Settlement Officer held a sifting inquiry into the question of abwab, and it is no exaggeration to say that if he had not dealt with this question as thoroughly as he had done, Mahatma Gandhi's work would have been even more difficult than it was. The Settlement Officer openly declared the *painkharcha* to be an illegal abwab and told the tenants that they could not be legally compelled to pay it. His subordinats held detailed inquiries from village as to what large and small canals there were and as to their capacity to irrigate the lands of the tenants and the amounts realized from them. It is said that one officer ordered that water should be allowed to flow freely to see how far it could irrigate the lands and he himself waited there to see the result. But in

spite of all the efforts of the factory employees, the water could not not go far, and thus the officer saw with his own eyes the inequity of the *painkharcha*. He reported to the Settlement Officer that this *painkharcha* was altogether illegal and the latter verified this report by his own personal inquiries. On his report the Government ordered this realization to be stopped. This was soon in the Bettiah Raj, which being under the Court of Wards, is directly in Government control but the lessees of the Ramnagar Raj continued realizing it. The tenants of some villages, however, became emboldened and refused to pay it; but wherever the lessees could get the upper hand, they realized it. The readers will also recollect that under the Bengal Tenancy Act a person who realizes abwab is liable to pay double the amount realized by him as penalty. But no steps were taken to enforce the law even against such of the planters as admitted having realized abwab. We do not know who is responsible for this. The Settlement Officer deserves the thanks of all for the action he took in stopping abwab. He acted very impartially and boldly in this matter.

This is what happened in north-western Champaran. There were no abwabs on such extensive scale in south eastern Champaran. There the trouble was about *tinkathia*, *sharahbeshi* (enhancement of rent) and *tawan*. The Settlement Officer had not the power to do anything about *tawan*, that used to be realized from the tenants, and he had no authority to interfere. But the question of *tinkathia* and *shurahbeshi* came up before him. It has to be stated with regret that in dealing with these questions he did not act with the same circumspection and care as he had shown in dealing with abwab.

The tenants stated before him that enhancement agreements were forcibly taken from them. He decided that coercion was not proved. It was argued on behalf of the tenants that these agreements were illegal under the Bengal Tenancy Act. He held that most of them were valid. The decision cannot be said to be impartial or just; for, as has already been mentioned, in deciding nine cases of the Turkaulia factory, the munsiff took several months. The Settlement Officer decided 25 to 30 thousands of such cases within a few months. Then again in 5 out of the 9 cases of Turkoulia, these agreements were held to be invalid

and their validity was upheld only in four of them. But the Settlement Officer had held most of them to be valid in favour of the planters. One thing more deserves to be mentioned. When it was proved that the agreement for enhancement was taken under undue influence or coercion and was consequently invalid, the Settlement Officer recorded it in the Record of Rights of the tenants that they were under an obligation to grow indigo in 3 *kathas* for every *bigha* of their holding, which in other words was only placing a weapon in the hands of the planters to oppress the tenants. It is not intelligible to ordinary men that tenants who had been fighting against *tinkathia* for generations and who had almost gained a victory, would easily give away the fruits of their victory and agree to compromises. But the Settlement Officer recorded a large number of such compromises and enhanced their rents. The result naturally was that there was great discontent among tenants who had become desperate. They had hoped that the settlement officer deputed by the Government would redress their grievances; but when they were disappointed even by him, their miseries became unbearable. Champaran was seething with this discontent when Mahatma Gandhi arrived on the scene.

It must be admitted that the Settlement Officer can justly lay claim to the credit of having put a new life into the tenantry of Champaran. The tenants learned to talk face to face to the planters in these Settlement Courts. It was in these courts that the tenants could see that the planter and the Government were not interchangeable terms, and that even such a thing as a decision against a planter was possible. No wonder then that, when Mahatma Gandhi arrived, they came in their thousands to him to tell him their woeful stories.

We have no doubt whatever that the decision of the Settlement Officer regarding *sharahbeshi* was wrong. But it is a question on which there is room for difference of opinion. To err is human, and even if the Settlement Officer erred, as we have no doubt he did, we cannot lay any blame on him.

The Setttlement Officer decided another matter also. Whenever the tenants of Champaran have tried to free themselves from the planter tyranny, the planters have always alleged that the tenants are quite happy, that the relations between them and their tenants are cordial, and that it is only under the instigation

of outsiders or of self-seeking men of Champaran that at times these happy and contented tenants get out of hand; so that if these instigators are got out of the way, all will be well. The Government also often accepted this story of the planters. But we have seen that whenever an inquiry has been held, no instigator has been discovered, while the allegations of the tenants have almost always been found to be true.

When Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Champaran, not only the planters but some Government officers also trotted out the same old story of an agitation manufactured by outside agency, but we shall presently see how they failed in their attempt to sidetrack the inquiry.

10

THE ADVENT OF MAHATMA GANDHI

The thirty-first session of the Indian National Congress met at Lucknow in December 1916. About 2,300 delegates from various parts of India attended it. After the split at Surat, Lokamanya Tilak for the first time attended the Congress with his followers. The Deccan and Sindh camps were full. The number of delegates from Gujarat, Madras and the Central Provinces was also considerable. For U.P., people to attend in large numbers was no matter of surprise, as the Congress was held in their Province. Mrs. Annie Besant with her followers came from Madras. Bengal had also sent a large number of delegates with the President. Even Bihar was awake and sent a large contingent of delegates. The reason for this was that it was proposed to place some important resolutions before the Congress on behalf of Bihar. Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by his son had also come from Gujarat and had taken his residence in a camp near the pandal.

It was proposed to place two resolutions on behalf of Bihar. One regarding the Patna University Bill, and the other regarding the relations between the planters and their tenants of Champaran. Before placing this last resolution before the Subjects Committee some people saw Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya and other leaders and discussed the matter with them. Pandit Malaviya knew something about it but Mahatma Gandhi

knew absolutely nothing. When the names of speakers on the resolution were being selected in the Subjects Committee Bihar delegates requested Mahatma Gandhi to speak, but he said that he knew nothing about the matter, and unless he made himself acquainted with the situation, he would say or do nothing. The burden of proposing the resolution fell upon Babu Brajakishoreprasad. On the second day of the session the following resolution was proposed before the Congress :

> "The Congress most respectfully urges on the Government the desirability of appointing a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials to inquire into the causes of agrarian trouble and the strained relations between the Indigo ryots and the European Planters in North Bihar and to suggest remedies therefor."

It is worth mentioning here that it was perhaps the first time in its history that the Congress had to listen to the grievances of the tenants from the lips of a tenant. The tenants of Champaran had sent Pandit Rajkumar Shukla as their representative to the Congress and he, in supporting the resolution, related the miserable plight of the Champaran tenantry.

It was the desire of Bihar and particularly Champaran delegates that Mahatma Gandhi should visit Champaran and see with his own eyes the pitiable condition of its people and devise means for improving it. Some people had also sent a letter to him, and one gentleman had even seen him at Ahmedabad in this connection. But on account of want of time Mahatma Gandhi had not been able to comply with their request. After the above resolution was adopted by the Congress, the Bihar delegates approached him and pressed him to come to Bihar. He promised he would try to come about following March or April. People were very much satisfied and on their way back some people accompanied him to Cawnpore and further related to him the woeful story of the tenants. His heart melted and he consoled them. They came back of Champaran full of hope and began to count the days of his advent.

After returning from Lucknow a letter was again sent by Pandit Rajkumar Shukla on behalf of the tenants on the 27th February 1917.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in reply that he would be in Calcutta on the 7th March and enquired where Rajkumar Shukla could meet him. On account of some mistake of the post office the letter unfortunately did not reach Rajkumar Shukla till after the 7th March. He had however received information that the Mahatma had gone to Calcutta but on arriving there he learnt that the Mahatma had already left the place for Delhi. Rajkumar Shukla returned to Champaran and wrote again to Mahatma Gandhi and received a reply on the 16th March 1917, saying that the Mahatma would take the earliest opportunity of visiting Champaran. On the 3rd April, 1917 Mahatma Gandhi wired to Rajkumar Shukla that he was going to Calcutta where he would stay with Mr. Bhupendranath Basu and asked Rajkumar Shukla to meet him there. On receipt of this telegram Rajkumar Shukla went to Calcutta and met the Mahatma there. No one in Bihar knew anything about all this at the time, so much so that some members from Bihar were present at the meeting of the All India Congress Committee to attend which Mahatma Gandhi had gone to Calcutta, but as it was nat known that he was proceeding to Champaran from Calcutta, no one had any talk with him. Rajkumar Shukla, too, did not meet any of the Bihar members who consequently remained utterly ignorant of Mahatmaji's intended visit.

Mahatma Gandhi started on the 9th April 1917, with Shuklaji and arrived at Patna on the 10th April 1917. Shuklaji took him straight to the house of the writer. The writer was absent in Calcutta for the meeting of the All India Congress Committee and had proceeded from there to Puri and had not returned till then to Patna. There was only a servant in the house. He did not recognize the distinguished guest and treated him as an ordinary visitor. The Mahatma stopped there for a shortwhile. When news of his arrival reached Mr. Mazharul Haque he came and took the Mahatma to his house. The Hon'ble Babu Krishnasahay also came and save the Mahatma there. The latter had decided to proceed to Muzaffarpur the same evening and sent telegraphic information to Mr. J.B. Kripalani who was at the time, a Professor in the G.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur, Mahatmaji started in the evening with Shuklaji for Muzaffarpur. The train reached Muzaffarpur at 10 O'clock at night. Professor Kripalani had received the telegram and was present at the station with some

of his students to receive Mahatmaji. Although there had been correspondence between never met before. No one could recognize him, but when Pandit Rajkumar Shukla saw the crowd of people he understood that they must have come to receive the Mahatma and he called them and showed the great man to them. People gave a reception at the station, took his *arti*, and dragged his carriage. Mahatmaji stopped with Professor Kripalani in his hostel.

On the 11th April 1917, Mahatma Gandhi saw Mr. J.M. Wilson, the Secretaiy of the Planters' Association, explained to him the object of his visit, told him that he had come to inquire into the causes of the misunderstanding between the tenants and the planters, and asked for his help in his inquiry. Mr. Wilson told him that he would give such assistance as he would be able to render in his personal capacity but he could not take any responsibility on behalf of the Association. The same evening a number of *vakils* of Muzaffarpur came to see Mahatmaji. One of them pressed Mahatmaji to proceed to Champaran at once. Mahatmaji agreed. On the 12th April 1917, Mahatmaji sent intimation of his arrival to the Hon'ble Mr. L.F. Morshead, the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, and informed him of the object of his visit and asked for an appointment to meet him. On the same day Mr. Wilson wrote to Mahatmaji saying that no inquiry was needed and advised him not to go to Champaran. He also said that if Mahatmaji commenced this work during war time, self-seeking agitators would utilize the opportunity for their selfish ends which might do more harm than good to those to help whom he came. Babu Brajakishore arrived at Muzaffarpur from Darbhanga the same evening. On the 13th April 1917, Mahatmaji saw the Commissioner. Mr. D. Weston, the Collector of Muzaffarpur, was also present there. The Commissioner expressed his disapproval of Mahatmaji's visit to Bihar and inquired who had brought him there. He also told him that inquiry way being made on behalf of the Government; that Mahatmaji's visit was unecessary; that he would not give any assistance to him in his inquiry and finally advised him to go away at once. Mahatmaji told him in replay that he had been receiving letters from the people for a long time but he could not produce them before him; that at the last Congress the delegates from Bihar had asked him to move a resolution at the Congress regarding Champaran but

that he would not make himself a party to it unless he had seen things with his own eyes; and thereupon the delegates had asked him to visit Champaran and he was accordingly there.

Mahatmaji was not likely to change his decision on account of this conversation with the Commissioner. The more the Secretary of the Planters' Association and the Commissioner persisted in their advice to him not to visit Champaran, his suspicion that there must be something wrong became deeper and his determination to go there more and more and more confirmed. The Mahatma could see after this interview that the planters and the local officials could not help him in his inquiry but might put obstacles in his way.

After his return from the Commissioner's house Mahatmaji asked some prominent delegates to the Lucknow Congress to give him a letter to the effect that they and some other delegates from Bihar had requested him at the Congress to hold an inquiry in Champaran. Along with this letter he sent a letter of his own, saying that he had come to find the truth with regard to the relation between planters and the ryots in view of certain statements which had been made to him. That was the only object of his visit and all that he wanted was peace with honour.

The news of Mahatmaji's arrival had already reached Champaran and a large number of tenants came all the way to Muzaffarpur. Mahatmaji listened to their story and perused such papers as he could get. He had not upto this time formed any idea as to the true situation in Champaran and at times it seemed that he was not inclined to believe all that he was told. He used sometimes to ask, "Is it possible ? Can this be true ?" But at the same time his resolve to go to Champaran was becoming more and more firm.

On 14th April 1917, he decided to start for Champaran on the following day (Sunday, the 15th April 1917) by the midday train and he asked those who were present there to give him some one who could act as interpreter, as he could not understand the dialect of the village people. It was decided at the time that arrangements should be made for this. In the evening of the same day he visited a neighbouring village and saw the condition of the people there. He entered the huts of some poor men, saw how they were living there and talked to little children and women. When he was leaving the village he said that India would get

Swaraj only when the condition of these people would improve. The same evening it was decided that Babu Dharanidhar and Babu Ramnavmiprasad, pleaders, would accompany Mahatmaji to Champaran. The conversation which Mahatmaji had that night with the people there greatly encouraged and inspired them. He related to them his South African experineces; how when one man was sent to jail, others used to take his place and how when he was also removed his place was taken by another and so on. He said, "I wish that work should be done in the same way here. I know that these people (planters and Government officials) would act harshly towards me and a warrant for my arrest may come any moment. I am, therefore, anxious to reach Champaran as quickly as possible, so that whatever action they may have to take against me, may be taken in the midst of the ryots of Champaran. I know that in Bihar I cannot get men of this type; those who will accompany me will only act as clerks and interpreters; as for the rest we shall see later."

On the 15th April 1917, Mahatmaji accompanied by Babus Dharanidhar and Ramnavmiprasad started by the midday train for Motihari. He was from his very start expecting a warrant of arrest. With the exception of a few necessary articles he had put the rest of his luggage separalely in a trunk. A large number of gentlemen came to see him off at the station. One the way at almost every station a large number of tenants had assembled to greet him. Mahatmaji reached Motihari at 3 O'clock in the afternoon and went straight to the house of Babu Gorakhprasad, pleader, where he stopped. The news of his arrival spread through the town in no time, and a large crowd assembled there. Many Government servants also came to see him; but finding the Policy there these retraced their steps. Mahatmaji immediately decided to visit a village, Jasaulipatti, on the next day (16-4-'17), from where news of oppression on a respectable farmer had been received; and the other tenants were informed that their statements would be recorded on the following Thursday afters his return from Jasaulipatti.

Arrangements were made for taking Mahatmaji to Jasaulipatti on the 16th April and accordingly, Mahatmaji and his two interpreters started for Jasaulipatti about 9 a.m. on an elephant. It was the month of Baishakh; the sun was hot and there was strong westerly wind, and one got almost scorched in the open.

Mahatmaji was not used to riding an elephant; then there were three men on the elephant and to add to all the strong west wind was actually causing a shower of dust and sand; but in the Mahatma's heart there was burning a fire to see and to redress the miseries of the ryots, compared with which the outward heat of the sun and the dust and sand were nothing. On the way they were talking on various subjects and topics. One of the subjects discussed was the '*purda*' system in Bihar. He said : "It is not my desire that our women should adopt the western mode of living; but we must realize what harm this pernicious system does to their health and in how many ways they are deprived of the privilege of helping their husbands." By 12 O'clock noon they had travelled about 9 miles from Motihari and reached a village called Chandrahia. Mahatmaji desired to see the condition of the village. On enquiry it was ascertained that it was one of the villages of the Motihari Factory and the majority of its residents were labourers, who had all gone of the factory for work. They, however, met a man who explained to them the condition of the village and boasted that even the Collector of the District dared not do anything against the Sahib, the Manager of the Factory. It appeared from his talk that he was connected with the factory. While this conversation was going on, a man in ordinary plain clothes was seen coming on a bicycle. He was a Police Sub-Inspector. He told Mahatmaji that the Collector had sent *salaams* to him (a police form of asking for an interview). Mahatmaji asked him to arrange for a conveyance and told his companions, "I was expecting that the something of this sort would happen. You need not mind it. You proceed to Jasaulipatti and do the work there. If necessary you may stop there for the night also." The Sub-Inspector brought a bullock cart and Mahatmaji started in it for Motihari, while his two companions proceeded to Jasaulipatti.

On the way Mahatmaji came across an *ekka* and on the request of the Sub-Inspector, he left the cart and took the *ekka*. When they had gone a short distance a police officer was seen coming on a *tamtam* and Mahatmaji was taken from the *ekka* to the *tamtam*. The police officer who had come in the *tamtum* was the Deputy Superintendent of Police. When they had gone a little further, he stopped the *tamtam*, showed a notice to Mahatmaji, who quietly read it and after reaching Motihari, gave him a receipt for it. The notice was a follows :

To

Mr. M.K. Gandhi

At present in Motihari.

Whereas it has been made to appear to me from the letter of the Commissioner of the Division, copy of which is attached to this order, that your presence in any part of the District will endanger the public peace and may lead to serious disturbance which may be accompanied by loss of and whereas urgency is of the utmost importance;

Now, therefore, I do hereby order you to abstain from remaining in the District, which you are required to leave by the next available train.

W.B. Heycock,
Dist. Magistrate,
Champaran

16th April, 1917

To the notice was annexed a copy of a letter from the Commissioner which was as follows :

To

The Dist. Magistrate of Champaran

Sir,

Mr. M.K. Gandhi has come here in response to what he describes as an insistent public demand to inquire into the conditions under which Indians work on indigo plantations and desires the help of the local administration. He came to see me this morning and I explained that the relations between the planters and the ryots had engaged the attention of the administration since the sixties, and that were particularly concerned with a phase of the problem in Champaran now; but that it was doubtful wnether the intervention of a stranger in the middle of the treatment of our case would not prove an embarrassment. I indicated potentialities on disturbance in Champaran, asked for credentials to show an insistent public demand for his inquiry and said that the matter would probably need reference to Government.

I expected that Mr. Gandhi would communicate with me again before he proceeds to Champaran but I have been informed since our interview that his object is likely to be agitation rather than a genuine search for knowledge and it is possible that he may proceed without further reference. I consider that there is a

danger of disturbance to the public tranquility should he visit your District. I have the honour to request you to direct him by an order under section 144 Cr. P.C. to leave it at once if he should appear.

I have the honour etc.
L. F. Morshead,
Commissioner of the Tirhut Division

Mahatmaji immediately on his arrival at Motihari sent the following reply to the Magistrate :

Sir,

With reference to the order under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code just served upon me I beg to state that I am sorry that you have felt called upon to issue it and I am sorry, too, that the Commissioner of the Division has totally misinterpreted my position. Out of a sense of public responsibility, I feet it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave the District but if it so pleases the authorities, I shall submit to be order by suffering the penalty of disobedience.

I must emphatically repudiate the Commissioner's suggestion that my object is likely to be agitation. My desire is purely and simply for a genuine search for knowledge. And this I shall continue to satisfy so long as I am free.

16th April, 1917 M. K. Gandhi

Mr. H.S. Polak, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya and other leaders of India as also the writer were informed of what had happened by telegrams and Mr. C. F. Andrews was wired to come at once.

Mahatmaji prepared a number of directions for the guidance of those who were to carry on the work after him.

Babus Dharanidhar and Ramnavmiprasad on the other hand reached Jasaulipatti at about 3 p. m. and after recording the statements of some men returned to Motihari and learned about the notice under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code. Mahatmaji gave them a copy of the directions he had prepared and explained to them in detail how the work would have to be conducted after his imprisonment. He also told them that if they followed him to jail, then his mission would be successful in no time.

The next day (Tuesday 17-4-'17) had already been fixed for recording the statements of tenants. Accordingly many tenants of Motihari and their statements began to be recorded. The Police Sub-Inspector also arrived on the scene and began to note down the names of the tenants who gave statements at first stealthily and after a time openly. Such large numbers of tenants had come that gentlemen who were recording the statements had not even a moment's rest throughout the day. Mahatmaji of course knew that he would have to go to jail for dis-obeying the order. He consequently did not allow the word in any way to suffer, nor was any mention made to the tenants of what had happened. On the same day it was decided that village Parsauni about 16 miles to the south of Motihari would be visited on the following day and information was sent accordingly. Conveyance was also arranged. The idea was to start at about 3 a.m. and if there was any delay or difficulty in getting the conveyance to go walking on foot.

While the arrangements were being made, telegrams were pouring in from all parts of India. Mr. Polak wired from Allahabad that he would reach Patna the same evening. Mr. Mazharul Haque wired his readiness to start, if required. Mahatmaji's reply to Mr. Haque's telegram was that Mr. Haque's presence would be required after his imprisonment. The writer was informed to come at once with volunteers. Pandit Malaviya wired for information and expressed his willingness to come, leaving the Hindu University work. The reply to him too was that his presence was not yet needed. The work of recording the statements of tenants went on the whole day.

When no summons was received upto the evening about any charge of disobedience of orders, Mahatmaji wrote a letter to the District Magistrate in which he intimated to him his intention of visiting village Parsauni on the next day. He also told the Magistrate that he did not intend doing anything secretly. It would, therefore, be better, if a police officer accompanied him. Immediately on receipt of the letter the Magistrate wrote to him that he would be charged with an offence under section 188 I. P. C., that the Magistrate hoped that he (Mahatmaji) would not leave Motihari. Shortly after this letter was received, the summons also came calling upon Mahatmaji to appear before the Sub-divisional Officer on the 18th April, 1917 at 12-30 p.m. After

this Mahatmaji further discussed the situation with his co-workers. It was first considered that they should stick to their programme and go to Parsauni. But later on it was thought that it was not necessary to do so. Mahatmaji asked them—"What will you do after I am sent to jail ?" The question was a difficult one and not easy to answer. Babu Dharanidhar said, "For the present I am only prepared for him that when you are sent to jail I will continue the work and if a notice under section 144 is served on me also, I will arrange for a substitute and leave the District. In this way the work will be continued at least for some time." Mahatmaji did not appear to be satisfied with this answer any more than his co-workers who went on considering and discussing this matter between themselves for the whole night. After summons had been served Mahatmaji felt quite contented and happy and sat down to write letters. He went on working the whole night without any rest at all. Mahatmaji in the course of the same night prepared a statement to be read before the Court. He also wrote letters to the Secretary of Planters' Association and the Commissioner in which he recounted insofar as he had come to know them, the grievances of the tenants and suggested the remedies; he gave instructions that these and some other letters which he wrote should be posted only after his imprisonment.

The writer after receiving the telegram at Patnassaw the principal publicists there and explained to them the situation that had arisen in Champaran. He also sent a telegram to Babu Brajakishore informing him of the proceedings under section 144. A telegram was received at Patna from Mr. Polak, that he would reach Patna the same evening by the Punjab Mail. In the evening a sort of small conference was held at Patna in which it was decided that Mr. Polak, the writer and such other persons as could be found, should start the next day (18-4-'17) by the morning train for Motihari. It was expected that Babu Brajakishore would also arrive by the same morning train.

The 18th of April 1917, is a memorable day in the history not only of Champaran, but of the whole of India. It was on this day that Mahatma Gandhi was preparing himself to go to jail for the sake of the poor and suffering people of the province of Bihar. On this day the whole of India was to get her first lesson and her first modern example of Satyagraha which was to open new flood gates of light and of vision before her. It is an old saying that no

harm can come to the true, but a practical demonstration of this was to be given to the world on this day by Mahatma Gandhi. Ready and determined to remove the grievances of the tenants, and equally determined to do no injury to those who had been oppressing them, it was, as it were, the great soul of Mahatma Gandhi was born in human shape to reconcile these apparently irreconcible elements. Could any obstacles bar the path of such a man ?

The eyes of all India from one end to the other were turned towards Champaran. Time passed, as if almost unnoticed, and it was about 12 noon. Mahatmaji separated those of his things which he wanted to take with himself to jail from those which he wanted to leave behind, and kept the latter in a separate place. The work of recording statements was also stopped today and the tenants were told that this work would commence again on the following day. At quarter past 12 Mahatmaji accompanied by his two interpreters started in a carriage for the Court. On the way Babu Dharanidhar told Mahatmaji that he and Babu Ramnavmi had decided to follow him to jail, even though others might not. Mahatmaji felt very much pleased and said with joy—"Now I know we shall succeed."

Although no information had been given to the tenants about the proceedings under section 144 and subsequent prosecution, yet the news had somehow reached not only every corner of the town but even distant villages and several thousand tenants had assembled in the Court compound and were waiting for Mahatmaji from 10 O'clock. Their own desire was to have a look at the man who was going to jail in order to relieve their distress. When Mahatmaji entered the Court room, he was followed by about 2,000 men who, in their anxiety to get in, broke the glass-panes of the doors. The Magistrate seeing the great crowd asked Mahatmaji to wait for a little while in the Mokhtiars' library. Mahatmaji went to the library while the Magistrate sent for armed police to prevent the people from entering the Court-room and to prevent any disturbance in his work. Mahatmaji was surrounded in the library by a large crowd of people, the eyes of all of whom were fixed on him, while tears were streaming down the cheeks of many of them. Shortly afterwards Mahatmaji was sent for and went to the Magistrate's Court-room. There the Govarnment pleader was ready with his books of law and

precedent. He had perhaps throught that he was going to prosecute a great man like Mahatma Gandhi who had himself been a famous lawyer and he expected that there would be a very long and learned argument. He had possibly not slept the previous night, looking up precedents and law reports. When Mahatmaji arrived, the Magistrate asked, "Have you got any pleader ?" and the short reply was "No, none." Some people were surprised, but still they thought that having been a great advocate he would himself argue his case. The Government pleader opened the case and stated that under orders issued under section 144 Mr. Gandhi ought to have left Champaran on the night of the 16th April, but that he had not yet done so and he was consequently charged with an offence under section 188 I.P.C. Mahatmaji said that on receipt of the order he had sent a reply to the Magistrate in which he had stated his reasons for disobeying the order and he had wished that the letter should be placed on the record. The Magistrate said that the letter was not there and if Mahatma Gandhi thought it necessary, he might apply for it. Thereafter Mahatma Gandhi read out his statement in a firm, calm and determined voice. While he was reading it there was pin-drop silence in spite of the large crowd that was present there, and all eyes were fixed on him, and as he proceeded wonder and unspeakable love became depicted on the faces of the audience. The statement was as follows :

"With the permission of the Court I would like a make a brief statement showing why I have taken a very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order made under section 144 of Cr. P. C. In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the local administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and cannot believe that my coming can in any way disturb public peace and cause loss of life. I claim to have consider able experience in such matters. The administration,

however, have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty and I admit, too, that they can only proceed upon information they receive. As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I came. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amidst this conflict of duty I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from them on the administration. I am fully conscious of the fact that a persons, holding in the public life of India a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting examples. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living the only safe and honourable course for a self-respecting man is, in the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is, to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience.

"I venture to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience."

Till now the Government pleader had been expecting that Mahatmaji would offer defence. It may be stated here that order under section 144 was wholly illegal. It is the opinion of many lawyers of note, that if the case had been argued and even if the Magistrate had convicted Mahatmaji, he would surely have been acquitted by the High Court. The Government pleader had anticipated this difficulty and had brought books to meet it as best as he might. The Magistrate could not make up his mind what to do next. He repeatedly asked Mahatmaji, if he pleaded guilty. Mahatmaji's reply was "I have said whatever I have to say in my statement." The Magistrate said that that did not contain a clear plea of guilty. Mahatmaji thereupon, said, "I do not wish to waste the time of the Court and I plead guilty." This put out the Magistrate still, further. He told Mahatmaji, "if you leave the District now and promise not to return, the case against you would be withdrawn." Mahatmaji replied, "That cannot be. Not to speak of this time alone, I shall make Champaran my home

even after my return from jail."

The Magistrate was dumb-founded and could only say that the matter required consideration and that he would pass orders later at 3 o'clock. The whole of this memorable trial was over in about half an hour's time and Mahatmaji was about to return to his lodgings when the Deputy Superintendent of Police came and told him that the Superintendent of Police wanted to see him. Mahatmaji accompanied him to the Superintendent. This latter gentleman had at one time been in South Africa and talked freely to Mahatmaji, claiming an old acquaintance. He spoke a great deal against Rajkumar Shukla and promised to bring about a meeting between Mahatmaji and planters. Thereafter Mahatmaji saw the District Magistrate Mr. W.B. Heycock, who expressed regret at the necessity he felt himself under to take proceedings against him and said that Mahatmaji ought to have seen him earlier. Mahatmaji replied that after the treatment he had received from the Commissioner it was neither possible nor proper for him to see the Magistrate to court a rebuff. The Magistrate requested Mahatmaji to postpone his visits to villages for three days to which Mahatmaji consented.

Mahatmaji appeared before the Magistrate shortly before 3 o'clock. The Magistrate told him that he would pass orders on 21st April, 1917, but that he would release him in the meantime on a bail of Rs. 100. Mahatmaji said that he had no bailor and could not offer bail. The Magistrate was again in difficulty and found a way out by offering to release him on his personal recognizance. Mahatmaji returned to his lodgings at about three o'clock. From there he sent information about what had happened to friends and newspapers, at the same time requesting them not to create any agitation in the Press until the Government orders were known.

On the 18th April, a party consisting of Messrs. Polak, Haque, Brajakishore, Anugrahanarayan, Shambhusharan and the writer left Patna by the 7 a.m. train for Motihari. On the way Mr. Polak recounted several stories of Mahatmaji's doings in South Africa and we reached Motihari at 3 p.m. On arriving there we learnt what had happened in Court in the course of the day and it seemed that matters would not probably proceed further and the case would most likely be withdrawn. It was at the same time felt that if, however, the case was not withdrawn and Mahatmaji was in any way touched then the work would have to be continued.

The new-comers were apprised of what had happened till then and the whole party met at 7-30 p.m. to consider the future plan of action. Here too the same question arose as to what would happen after Mahatmaji's imprisonment. There was no doubt that the work must be continued; but if in continuing it, it was necessary to face imprisonments, should we be able to do so ? The new-comers felt very much encouraged when they heard of the determination of Babu Dharnidhar and Babu Ramnavmi and they all said in one voice that they also would not lag behind. When we were discussing this matter amongst overselves Mahatmaji was not there. When we had decided this we communicated our decision to him. Mahatmaji was filled with joy and Mr. Polak also was very much pleased. Mahatmaji, like the practical man that he is, asked us to make a definite programme. It was accordingly decided that if Mahatmaji went to jail, Mr. Haque and Babu Brajakishoreprasad would take the lead and intimation of this would be sent to the Government officers. If they were removed, then Babu Dharnidhar and Babu Ramnavmi would take charge of the work. If they too were picked up, the writer, Babu Shambhusharan, and Babu Anugrahanarayan, would continue the work. It was hoped that by the time these batches were removed, other people would have joined the party and further programme would be fixed later on. In accordance with this decision Mr. Haque and Babu Brajakishore were permitted to go to Patna and Darbhanga respectively to settle their affairs at home, so that they might return by the 21st April which was the date fixed by the Magistrate for passing orders. Mr. Haque had a professional engagement at Gorakhpur and it was arranged that he would return straight from Gorakhpur either on the evening of the 21st or on the morning of the 22nd. Mr. Haque who was then a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council sent a long telegram to the Viceroy, detailing the happenings in Champaran. After arranging all this Mr. Polak, Mr. Haque and Babu Brajakishore left Motihari by the night train.

From 19-4-'17 batches after batches of tenants began to pour in and Mahatma Gandhi's assistants began to record their statements. Mahatmaji himself recorded the statements of a few of these and read the statements recorded by others. Those who were entrusted with the work of recording statements were told to cross-examine the tenants carefully and closely, to record only such statements as appeared to them to be true, and if they came across

any case which required immediate enquiry to draw Mahatma Gandhi's attention to it. While we were recording statements the Police Sub-Inspector used to be present taking notes of what was going on. On this day, too, telegrams were received from various parts of the country and information was sent to friends of what was happening. Mr. C.F. Andrews arrived that afternoon. He had never been to Champaran before, and the people of Champaran too had never seen an Englishman like Mr. Andrews. His simple dress, plain and straight talk and above all his face beaming with love endeared him to all who came near him. Mahatmaji related to him all that had happened. Mr. Andrews went to see the Collector, but could not meet him.

We had all been staying upto this time at the house of Babu Gorakhprasad; but our number was growing and we saw that the work was likely to take time. It was accordingly decided that we should take a house on rent. Babu Ramadayalprasad, who is an enthusiastic young man of the famous Sahu family of the place, secured a house for us. It was decided that we should shift to that house and Mahatmaji ordered that we should remove that very evening. We accordingly went to the new house the same night. It is necessary to state here that all the time that Mahatmaji and his assistants remained in Champaran the Sahu family gave them every kind of assistance.

On Mr. Polak returning to Patna, a meeting of the Bihar Provincial Association was held under the presidency of the Hon'ble Rai Krishnasahai Bahadur. Mr. Polak explained the situation in Champaran and requested the leaders to go to Champaran. The Association resolved to give all possible assistance to Mahatmaji in his inquiry.

On the 20th April 1917, Mr. Andrews saw the Collector, Mr. Heycock. There he learnt that the case against Mahatmaji would be withdrawn and the Government officers would help him in the enquiry. We were not aware of this decision of the Government and it had accordingly been decided on the 19th to request Bihar leaders to visit Champaran, and telegrams had been sent to Mr. Hasan Imam, Mr. S. Sinha and the Hon'ble Babu Krishnasahai. Babu Brajakishoreprasad returned the same day from Darbhanga. The Statements of the tenants continued to be recorded the whole day. There was such a continuous stream of these tenants that there was not a minute's break between 6-30 a.m. and 6-30 p.m,

Many had to stay overnight and still their statements could not be recorded the next day. We accordingly arranged to take down the names of all those who were left over for the next day for want of time and they were given priority the following day. Work continued like this.

At about 7 p.m. notice was received that the case had been withdrawn.

On 21-4-'17 statements continued to be recorded. There was a great crowd of tenants. They were under the impression that orders in the Mahatma's case would be passed that day and they had come from long distances. From Bettiah alone some 500 persons had come. When they received the news of the withdrawal of the case, they were naturally very plased. They also came to get their statements recorded. Two Sub-Inspectors of Police who had been kept to watch us and our proceedings were removed from that duty this day. The same afternoon Mr. S. Sinha and Rai Bahadur Krishnasahai arrived from Patna and had a long conversation with Mahatmaji. Mr. Hassan Imam could not come himself, but he sent monetary assistance. Mahatmaji decided to go to Bettiah on the 24th.

Mr. Andrews had previously settled to go to Fiji. Mahatmaji was of opinion that he should not change his programme. We were of opinion that the trouble with the planters was not yet quite over and the presence of a gentleman like Mr. Andrews would be a great help. We spoke to Mr. Andrews and he said that he would abide by Mahatmaji's decision. In the evening the matter was mentioned to Mahatmaji and it was suggested that Mr. Andrews should be detained The reply that Mahatmaji give us had a great effect on our mental outlook. He said he knew the reason why we wanted to detain Mr. Andrews and that reason was that this fight being against the white planters the presence of a white man like Mr. Andrews would give us some protection; but that he (Mahatmaji) was not prepared to seek or give any protection of that sort. It was a weakness on our part to seek it and it was necessary for that very reason that Mr. Andrews should go. But if Mr. Andrews felt the call for Champaran as more urgent than that for Fiji he might stay; but this he must decide himself. It was ultimately settled that Mr. Andrews should go to Fiji and that he must start by the next morning train.

On this and the following days a number of pleaders arrived

from Muzaffarpur and Chapra to help in recording statements. As usual there was a large crowd of tenants. Mr. Andrews started by the 10 a.m. train and Mr. Haque returned from Gorakhpur by the same train. While we were recording statements information was received from a village that a man had been shut up by the underlings of a factory in one of its godowns. Mahatmaji deputed Babu Anugrahanarayan to proceed to the place at once and wrote to the Superintendent of Police asking for his assistance. Babu Anugrahanarayan reached the place, but the factory people having received information of his arrival let off the man and asked him to go out by a back-door. Anugrahababu chanced to meet the man and brought him to Motihari.

The same afternoon Mahatmaji accompanied by some of the workers went to Bettiah leaving behind others at Motihari to record statements of tenants who came there.

When the news of the proceedings under section 144 Cr. P.C. and the prosecution of Mahatma Gandhi and its withdrawal was published almost all the papers of India severely criticized the action of the Commissioner and praised the Government for ordering withdrawal of the case and directing its local officers to help Mahatmaji.

11

MAHATMA GANDHI AT BETTIAH

It has been said above that Mahatma Gandhi went to Bettiah by the afternoon train of the 22nd April. The news of the withdrawal of the case, as also that Mahatmaji was going to Bettiah by that train had already spread. There were crowds of people awaiting at every railway station to have a look (*darshan*) at him; and the arriaval of the train was signalized by shouts of *Jai* and showering of flowers. The train reached Bettiah at about 5 p.m. There was such a huge crowd at the station that to avoid any accident the train had to be stopped some way off from the platform. The Mahatma was travelling in a 3rd class compartment. The people of the town and villages welcomed him. They rent the skies with their cries of *Jai* and there was a regular hailstorm of flowers.

Mahatmaji took his seat in a carriage. The people unharnessed the horses and wanted to pull the carriage themselves. But

Mahatmaji prohibited them and expressed his determination to leave the carriage if they persisted. The people yielded and the horses were again harnessed. More than 10,000 people were present there. The carriage could move but slowly and with great difficulty. On both sides of the road countless men and women were standing. It was the long-looked-for day of Mahatma Gandhi's arrival and he had arrived. No one felt any doubt that the miseries of the tenants would now disppear. This faith was deeply engraven on their simple faces. No one had said anything to the people about Mahatmaji. Very few people knew his past career. There were fewer still who were acquainted with his South African Satyagraha. What was it that created this confidence ? It was apparently without any reason. What was at the root of this firm and unquestioning faith ? I cannot answer this question. The faith was firm, the heart was true. These bore their fruit. Mahatmaji drove from the station to the *dharmshala* of Babu Hazarimal. There he was received by Babu Surajmal, who made all arrangements for Mahatmaji's stay there. Mahatmaji stayed at the *dharmshala* all the time he remained in Bettiah and the proprietors were ever ready to serve.

On the following day Mahatmaji saw Mr. W.H. Lewis, the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Bettiah and Mr. J.T. Whitty, the Manager of the Bettiah Raj. They had already received communication from the Collector about Mahatmaji.

At Bettiah also statements began to be recorded. There used to be large crowds here also. On the 24th April Mahatmaji and Babu Brajakishore went to a village called Laukaria. The people related to them their grievances. Mahatmaji talked to small boys, inquired about the wages paid to them by factories and by other agriculturists, and made rather shifting enquiries about wages. Mr. Lewis also visited the place where statements were being recorded and stopped there for a short time. In spite of his presence the tenants fearlessly metioned their grievances. Babu Brajakishoreprasad was recording their statements after subjecting them to a searching cross-examination. It is believed that Mr. Lewis came back satisfied with method and procedure of the inquiry. Mahatmaji spent the night there. He also visited Mr. H. Gale, the Manager of the Byreah factory, and had a long talk with him about his factory and his villages. While Mahatmaji was returning from the factory, an incident occurred which

deserves mention here. He had gone a short distance when a factory servant came running to him and told him, "I was apprehending that the factory manager might behave rudely towards you; I was, therefore, over-hearing the whole conversation from a concealed corner, ready to come to your assistance, come what might to me, in case anything untoward happened to you." The way he spoke showed that he was speaking the truth and this incident only proves that even those who were not in a position to support and help Mahatmaji openly were secretly praying for his success, and further were even ready to come to his assistance, if any occasion demanded it.

On the evening of the 25th April, Mahatmaji came back all the way walking from Laukaria to Bettiah which caused a swelling in one of his feet.

The work of recording statements was going on at Motihari; but since Mahatmaji's arrival at Bettiah the crowd there became larger and more assistants had to be called there. The statements which were recorded at Motihari used to be sent every night to Mahatmaji through a messenger.

On the 26th of April Mahatmaji went to see a village, Sindhachapra under the Kuria factory. This village is at a short distance from Bettiah. There were also some policemen with him. He went round the village and saw the condition there. What he saw there melted his heart. He found indigo grown all round the houses of the tenants.

On the 27th April, Mahatmaji accompanied by Babu Brajakishoreprasad and others went to see some villages under the Belwa factory. On the way Babu Vindhyabasiniprasad, a *vakil* from Gorakhpur, joined the party to assist Mahatmaji. Early in the morning Mahatmaji and the party started on foot from the Narkatiaganj Railway Station for Murali Bharahwa which is at a distance of 6 or 7 miles from there. In spite of the hot sun of the month *Baisakh* they all managed to reach Murali Bharahwa on foot at about 10 o'clock. Pandit Rajkumar Shukla, who had been sent to the Lucknow Congress as their representative by the tenants of Champaran and who had accompanied Mahatmaji from Calcutta, is a resident of this village. He showed his house to Mahatmaji, which, he said, had been looted by the factory people only a month before. The framework of the house was standing in a disturbed condition. The earthen *kothis* in which grain is

kept were lying upset and trunks of the plantain trees were lying here and there scattered on the ground. On his fields, which, he said, were grazed by cattle under orders of the factory, were still standing the stalks and stems of the crop which had been so destroyed.* Mahatmaji saw all this and way very much touched. A large number of persons were examind there and hundreds of people made statements about the loot. Some of them were people whose cattle were let loose to graze in the field. Mahatmaji went and saw Mr. A.C. Ammon, the Manager of the Belwa factory. At night the party stayed in the village of Belwa and the next morning they all returned to Bettiah.

After his return from Belwa he again went and saw Mr. Lewis and Mr. Whitty and had a long talk with them. The planters and the local officers were very much upset by Mahatmaji's visit. Mr. Lewis was very apprehensive and had drawn before his imagination a terrible picture of a likely disturbance and had begun to imagin that no one would care for any Government officials any more. From the talk that he had with Mahatmaji the latter gathered that he would send a report about all this to the Government.

At about 4-30 the same afternoon we all began to discuss what we should do if the Government took steps again against the party. We could not be punished for any offence without a regular trial. The expedient of section 144 Cr. P.C. would now fall flat on us and the people alike; but still here was the Defence of India Act under which we could all be externed from Champaran. We thought that if the Government decided upon this course, all of us would be got out of the way at one stroke. We had by this time recorded statements of thousands of tenants and had become acquainted with almost all the grievances of Champaran. There was hardly any locality in the whole District from which some tenants had not come to us and given their statements. There was no factory in the whole District with whose doings and activities we had not become familiar. If we were all removed together, it was just possible that the statements which we had recorded and the documentary evidence that we had collected might be lost or

* Rajkumar Shukla stated the fact of his house being looted before the Agrarian Committee. But it was denied by Mr. A.C. Ammon, the Manager of the Belwa factory.

might become useless. We knew that if we were removed, another batch of workers would come and take our places but the fresh batch would have to collect the same evidence anew and it was just possible that it might not get the documents with the ease and quickness with which we had got them. Then again the new batch would be wholly unacquinted with Champaran and its conditions. Mahatmaji discussed all this with us for a pretty long time. It was suggested by some of us that several copies should be made of the documents and the statements and complete sets of such copies should be kept in various places so that the new batch might get hold of at least one such set and even if the Government forfeited the copy in their possession, some copy might still be available somewhere. After considering all this Mahatmaji said that the Government might deal with us as it liked, but it would be an act of supreme folly on its part to forfeit or to destroy the evidence we had collected, and it would never do any such thing. because if the Government destroyed that evidence then any statement that we who had collected the evidence might make would have to be accepted, and Government would expose itself to attack on all sides without gaining anything. But as a precautionary measure it was desirable to have more than one copy of all our papers. We went on discussing all this till late at night. The same evening after 8 p.m. Mr. Lewis sent a report which he was submitting to the Government to Mahatmaji for his perusal asking him at the same time to tend any note of his own regarding the subject matter of the report. Mahatmaji returned the report with his note the same night.

On 30th April 1917, Mahatmaji went to Sathi factory and met its Manager Mr. C. Still. There he also met Mr. Gordon Canning the Manager of the Parsa factory. He had a long conversation with them. After hearing the statements of some tenants Mahatmaji returned to Bettiah by the evening train.

On the 1st of May, Mahatmaji went to Motihari, accompanied by Babu Brajakishore. On the second May there was a meeting of planters. Many of the planters attended it. They invited Mahatmaji also. There was a long talk on various matters; but nothing came out of it. On the 3rd May Mahatmaji after seeing Mr. Heycock, the District Magistrate and Mr. Sweeney, the Settlement Officer, returned to Bettiah.

The Bihar Government was not out of touch with the progress

of events in Champaran. The local officers ware sending no doubt highly coloured reports. The planters also sent their representatives on deputation to lay the complaints before the Government. The European Defence Association of Muzaffarpur induced its parent Association in Calcutta to make representation to the Government of India in which they asked that Mahatma Gandhi's enquiry should be stopped. But if the Government did not want to do that it should appoint a Commission of its own. It seems that when the planters did not feel satisfied with the result of the conversation that they had with Mahatmaji on the 2nd May, they began to take these steps. Mahatmaji used to inform the planters and the Government officials of all that he was doing. On the other hand the planters were doing all this secretly and no news of it was allowed to reach him. As a result of this deputation, a telegram was received by Mahatmaji from the Chief Secretary to the Government from Ranchi on 6th May 1917, informing him that the Hon'ble Mr. W. Maude would be going to Patna on the 10th May and requesting Mahatmaji to meet him there. We thought that the Government was going to take some action; but we did not expect that it would stop the enquiry. The rush of tenants went on increasing. Volunteers from various districts of Bihar had come to assist in the work and it was going on smoothly. At intervals the leaders of Bihar also used to come. On the 5th May Babu Parameshwarlal, Bar-at-Law, came to Bettiah from Patna and stayed there for several days.

12

INTERVIEW WITH THE HON'BLE MR. MAUDE

On the morning of the 9th May 1917, Mahatmaji accompanied by Babu Brajakishore started for Patna to have an interview with Mr. Maude. The news that Mahatmaji would travel by that train had spread and at every station there was a crowd of people waiting to see him raising the usual cry of *Jai* and showering flowers on him. Mahatmaji reached Patna at 7 O'clock in the evening. It was raining hard at the time. But in spite of the rain there was a large crowd waiting at the station. Almost all the leaders of Patna and several thousands of people had come to welcome him. Mahatmaji stopped at the house of Mr. Mazharul-Haque.

On the 10th May, Mahatmaji had an interview with Mr. Maude for about two hours. On the previous day Mr. Maude had already met Mr. Heycock, the District Magistrate of Champaran, Mr. Whitty, the Manager of Bettiah Raj and Mr. Lewis, the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Bettiah. We do not know what talk took place between Mahatmaji and Mr. Maude. But it seems that the planters had poisoned the ears of the Government and made serious charges against Mahatmaji's assistants. They had urged before the Government that the pleaders who were working with Mahatmaji were the root of all mischief and they should be removed from Champaran without delay. The reader must remember that Babu Brajakishore's name was not unknown to them on account of his activities in the Bihar Council in favour of the tenants. When Mahatmaji met Mr. Maude, after talking about other matters, Mr. Maude insisted that Mahatmaji should remove his pleader assistants from Champaran. Mahatmaji assured Mr. Maude that those who were associated with his were not in any way against the Government or likely to cause any disturbance and he altogether refused to comply with this desire of the Government. It was, however, agreed that Mahatmaji would submit a report of his enquiry as soon as possible and that method of enquiry should now change, but that it should not be stopped.

On 11-5-'17 Mahatmaji returned to Bettiah and began to prepare his report as desired by Mr. Maude. On 12-5-'17 a report comprising the main heads of grievances of the tenants was prepared on the basis of the evidence recorded. It is necessary to quote that report verbatim so that the readers might judge for themselves how each one of these complaints was proved to be true before the Agrarian Committee. Copies of this report were also sent to the Government officers in the District, the Manager of the Bettiah Raj and Secretary of the Planters' Association. The report was as follows :

"In accordance with the suggestion made by Hon'ble Mr. Maude, I beg to submit herewith the preliminary conclusions which I have arrived at as a result of the enquiry being made by me into the agrarian conditions of the ryots of Champaran.

"At the outset I would like to state that it was not possible

for me to give the assurance which Mr. Maude would have liked me to have given, viz., that the *vakil* friends who have been assisting me would be withdrawn. I must confess that this request has hurt me deeply. It has been made ever since my arrival here. I have been told, i.e., after the withdrawal of the order of removal from the District, that my presence was harmless enough and that my *bonefieds* were unquestioned, but that the presence of the *vakil* friends was likely to create "a dangerous situation". I venture to submit that if I may be trusted to conduct myself decorously I may be equally trusted to choose helpers of the same type as myself. I consider it a privilege to have the association in the difficult task before me of these able, earnest and honourable men. It seems to me that for me to abandon them is to abandon my work. It must be a point of honour with me not to dispense with their help until anything unworthy is proved against them to my satisfaction. I do not share the fear that either my presence or that of any friends can create a "dangerous situation". The danger, if any, must be in the causes that have brought about the strained relation between the planters and the ryots. And if the causes were removed, there never need be any fear of a "dangerous situation" arising in Champaran so far as the ryots are concerned.

"Coming to the immediate purpose of this representation I beg to state that nearly 4,000 ryots have been examined and their statements taken after careful cross-examination. Several villages have been visited and many judgments of courts studied. And the enquiry is in my opinion capable of sustaining the following conclusions.

"Factories or concerns in the District of Champaran may be divided into two classes :

"(1) Those that have never had indigo plantation and (2) Those that have.

"(1) The concerns that have never grown indigo have exacted abwabs known by various local names equal in amount at least to the rent paid by the ryots. This exaction, although it has beed held to be illegal, has not altogether stopped.

"(2) The indigo growing factories have grown indigo either under the *tinkathia* system or *khuski*. The farmer has been most prevalent and has caused the the greatest hardship. The type has varied with progress of time. Starting with indigo it has taken in its sweep all kinds of crops. It may now be defined as an obligation presumed to attach to the ryot's holding whereby the ryot has to grow a crop on 3/20th of the holding at the will of the landlord for a stated consideration. There appears to be no legal warrant for it. The ryots have always fought against it and have only yield to force. They have not received adequate consideration for the services. When, however, owing to the introduction of synthetic indigo the price of the local product fell, the planters desired to cancel the indigo *sattas*. They, therefore, devised a means of sadding the losses upon the ryots. In lease-hold lands they made the ryots pay *tawan*, i.e., damages to be extent of Rs. 100 per *bigha* in consideration of their waiving their right to indigo cultivation. This, the ryots claim, was done under coercion. Where the ryots could not find cash, handnotes and mortgage deeds were made for payment in instalment bearing interest at 12 per cent per annum. In these the balance due has not been described as *tawan*, i.e., damage, but it has been fictitiously treated as an advance to the ryot for some purpose of his own.

"In *mokarrari* land the damages have taken the shape of *sharahbeshi sattas*, meaning enhancement or rent in lieu of indigo cultivation. The enhancement according to the survey report has in the case of 5,955 tenancies amounted to Rs. 31,062, the pre-enhancement figure being Rs. 53,865. The total number of tenancies affected is much larger. The ryots claim that these *sattas* were taken from them under coercion. and it is inconceivable that the ryots would agree to an enormous perpetual increase in their rents against freedom liability to grow indigo for a temporary period, which freedom they were strenuously fighting to secure and hourly expecting.

"Where *tawan* has not been exacted the factories have forced the ryots to grow oats, sugarcane of such other crop under the *tinkathia* system. Under the *tinkathia* system the ryot has been obliged to give his best land for the landlord's crops; in some cases the land in front of his house has been so used; he has been obliged to give his best time and energy also to it so that very little time has been left to him for growing his own crops—his means of livelihood.

"Cart-hire *sattas* have been forcibly taken from the ryots for supplying carts to the factories on hire insufficient even to cover the usual outlay. Inadequate wages have been paid to the ryots where labour has been impressed and even boys of tender age have been made to work against their will.

"Ploughs of the royts have been impressed and detained by the factories for days together for ploughing factory lands for a trifling consideration and at a time when they have required them for cultivating their own lands.

"*Dasturi* has been taken by the notoriously ill-paid factory *amlas* out of the wages received by the labourers often amounting to the fifth of their daily wages and also out of the hire paid for the carts and in some villages the Chamars have been forced to give up to the factories the hides of the dead cattle belonging to the ryots. Against the carcasses the Chamars used to supply the ryots with shoes a leather strap for ploughs, and their women had to render services to the latter's families at childbirth. Now they have ceased to render these valuable services. Some factories have for the collection of such hides opened hide-godowns.

"Illegal fines, often of heavy amounts have been imposed by factories upon ryots who have proved unbending.

"Among the other (according to the evidence before me) methods adopted to bend the ryots to their will be planters have impounded the ryot's cattle, posted peons on their houses, withdrawn from them barbers', *dhobis*', carpenters' and smiths' services have prevented the use of village wells and pasture lands by ploughing up the pathway and the lands just in front of or behind their homesteads, have brought or promoted civil suits or criminal complaints against them and resorted to actual physical force and wrongful confinements. The planters have successfully used the institutions of the

country to enforce their will against the ryots and have not hesitated to supplement them by taking the law in their own hands. The result has been that the ryots have shown an abject helplessness, such as I have not witnessed in any part of India where I have travelled.

"They are members of District Board and Assessors under the Chaukidari Act and keepers of pounds. Their position as such has been felt by the ryots. The roads which the latter pay for at the rate of half an anna per rupee of rent paid by them are hardly available to them. Their carts and bullocks which perhaps most need the roads are rarely allowed to make use of them. That this is not peculiar to Champaran does not in any way mitigate the grievance. I am aware that there are concerns which from exception to the rule laid down but as a general charge the statements made above are capable of proof.

"I am aware, too, that there are some Indian Zamindars who are open to the charges made above. Relief is sought for in their cases as in those of the planters. Whilst there can be no doubt that the latter have inherited a vicious system, they with their trained minds and superior position have rendered it to an exact science, so that the ryots would not only have been unable to raise their heads above water but would have sunk deeper still had not the Government granted some protection. But that protection has been meagre and provokingly slow and has often come too late to be appreciated by the ryots.

"It is true that the Government await the Settlement Officer's report on some of these matters covered by this representation. It is submitted that when the ryots are groaning under the weight of oppression such as I have described above, an enquiry by the Settlement Officer is a cumbersome method. With him the grievances mentioned herein are but an item in an extensive settlement operation. Nor does his enquiry cover all the points raised above. Moreover grievances have been set forth which are not likely to be disputed. And they are so serious as to require an immediate relief.

"That *tawan* and *sharahbeshisattas* and abwabs that have been exacted cannot be questioned. I hope it will not be

argued that the ryots can be fully protected as to these by recourse to low. It is submitted that where there is wholesale exaction, courts are not sufficient protection for the ryots and the administrative protection of the *Sircar* as the supreme landlord is an absolute necessity.

"The wrongs are twofold. There are wrongs which are accomplished facts and wrongs which continue. The continuing wrongs need to be stopped at once and small enquiry may be made to the past wrongs such as damages and abwabs already taken and *sharahbeshi* payment already made The ryots should be told by proclamation and notices distributed broadcast among them that they are not only not bound to pay abwabs, *tawan* and *sharahbesi* charges but that they ought not to pay them, that the *Sircar* will protect them if any attempt is made to enforce payment thereof. They should further be enformed that they are not bound to render any personal services to their landlords and that they are free to sell their services to whomsoever they choose and that they are not bound to grow indigo, sugarcane or any other crop unless they wish to do so and unless it is profitable for them. The Bettiah Raj leases given to the factories should not be renewed until the wrongs are remedied and should, when renewed, properly safeguard ryots' rights.

"As to *dasturi* it is clear that better paid and educated men should substitute the present holders of responsible offices and that no countenance should be given to the diminution in ryots' wages by illegal exaction of *dasturi*. I feel sure that the planters are quite capable of dealing with the evil although it is in their language 'as old as the Himalayas'.

"The ryots being secured in their freedom it would be no longer necessary to investigate the question of inadequacy or otherwise of the consideration in the indigo *sattas* and cart-hire *sattas* and the wages. The ryots by common agreement should be advised to finish indigo or other crops for the current year. But henceforth, whether it is indigo or any other crop it should be only under a system of absolute free will.

"It will be observed that I have burdened the statement with us little argument as possible. But if it is the desire of the Government that I should prove any one of my conclusions I shall be pleased to tender the proofs on which they are

based.

"In conclusion I would like to state that I have no desire to hurt the planters' feeling. I have received every courtesy from them. Believing as I do that ryots are labouring under a grievous wrong from which they ought to be freed immediately, I have dealt as calmly as is possible for me to do so, with the system which the planters are working. I have entered upon my mission in the hope that they as Englishmen born to enjoy the fullest personal liberty and freedom will not fail to rise to their status and will not be grudging the ryots the same measure of liberty and freedom.

"I am sending copies to the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, the Collector of Champaran, the Sub-Divisional Officer of Bettiah, the Manager of the Bettiah Raj, the secretaries respectively of the Bihar Planters' Association and the District Planters' Association. I am circulating also among those leaders of public opinion in the country who have kept themselves in touch with the work being done by my colleagues and myself. The copies are being marked "not for publication", as there is no desire to invite a public discussion of the question unless it becomes absolutely necessary.

"I need hardly give the assurance that I am at the disposal of the Government whenever my presence may be required.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
M.K. Gandhi"

13

CONSTERNATION AMONGST PLANTERS

After Mahatmaji's return from Patna a change was introduced in the method of recording the statements. Till then we used to record the entire statements of the tenants and as a matter of fact we had so far recorded such statements of about 4,000 tenants. On the basis of these statements we prepared a list of the heads of grievances and it was not necessary to record any more statements in full, Henceforward we made a precis note of their statements. This lightened our labour to some extent and we were able to give time to fully study and analyse the evidence so far collected.

The planters on the other hand were very much perturbed and were trying to put obstacles in the way of Mahatmaji at every step. But the temper of tenants was altogether changed and they were not likely to be cowed down by a show or threat of force on the part of the factory. The tenants who had been oppressed for hundred years or more began to realize that if they did not get their freedom on this occasion, they would continue in their bondage for ever. The boldness and the work of Mahatmaji inspired them with courage. They were no more likely to be deterred from coming to him.

On the upper floor of the *dharamshala* at Bettiah there was a small room. Mahatmaji occupied it, while his assistants used to stay on the ground-floor where they used to record statements or to do other things. The crowd of tenants used to be so large that it was difficult to work. The outer gate used to be closed. Only those tenants used to be taken to Mahatmaji whose statements contained something unusual or an interview with whom was considered necessary. The tenants however did not rest satisfied with giving their statements. They would not return home without having a *darshan* of the Mahatmaji. The gate used, therefore, to be opened every afternoon and they were allowed to go up to the extensive roof of the *dharamshala* which used to be filled up in no time. When the gate was opened, it was difficult for some time on account of the rush of tenants to go up or down by the stair-cases.

Mahatmaji had fully understood the significance of the hue and cry raised by the planters and he used to take such steps as he thought necessary to counteract their tactics. He used occasionally to send all available information to Government officials and kept most of the prominent leaders of the country informed of what was happening in Champaran. He used occasionally to send reports to them of the worked done and to ask them to give such assistance as the occasion demanded or to keep themselves in readiness to render him assistance when called upon to do so. At the same time not one of these bulletins or reports or any of the facts mentioned therein was ever allowed to be published in newspapers. The reason was plain. Mahatmaji was anxious to redress the grievances of the tenants, not to create any agitation. In spite of this precaution, however, the planters left no stone unturned to hamper his work so that they might not be deprived of their ill-

ill-gotton profit derived principally from oppression of the tenants.

On receipt of Mahatmaji's report, the Government called for reports on the same from the district officers, the Settlement Officer and the planters before the 30th of June 1917. It was not to be supposed, however, that during this period there was to be plain-sailing. How could the planters keep quiet over this matter ? On the 16th of May a telegram of the *Associated Press*, stated that a part of the Olaha factory which was one of the branches of the Turkaulia factory had been burnt, causing a lose of several thousands to the factory and that the planters suspected it to be a case of incendiarism.

There is a factory called Dhokraha at a short distance from Bettiah. The manager of that factory Mr. A.K. Holttum had told Mahatmaji that his tenants had no complaints against him and had invited Mahatmaji to see some of his villages. He had said the same thing to Mr. Lewis also. It was arranged that Mahatmaji would visit a place called Sarisawa. It is necessary to remind the readers that Mr. Holttum is the gentleman against whom the complaint of the tenants was that instead of taking enhancement agreements from them he had settled small bits of *zerait* land and had added to the rent of those bits the entire amount of enhancement to which he considered himself entitled.

On the morning of the 16th May, Mahatmaji started for Dhokraha accompanied by the writer and Professor Kripalani, whose services had been dispensed with by the Muzaffarpur College and who had joined our party to assist Mahatmaji in his Champaran work. We started very early from Bettiah. We had conveyances but decided to walk. We reached Sarisawa bazaar which is about 8 miles from Bettiah, at about 8 a.m. A large number of tenants had assembled even before our arrival. On our way some tenants told us that the manager had arranged to bring a number of men with him who would come fully tutored to say that the tenants were quite contented, that they had no grievances whatsoever, etc. etc.

On arrival there Mr. Holttum also arrived. We all met in a small orchard. About 300 tenants were there. While Mahatmaji and Mr. Holttum were talking Mr. Lewis also arrived in his car. Mr. Holttum showed some papers to Mahatmaji and told him that complaint against him regarding enhancement was totally false, that he had settled his *zerait* lands with tenants on account of

their persistent demand; that by so settling his *zerait* he was not a gainer, rather he could earn more from those lands than he got as rent for them and that the tenants were at liberty to surrender them if they so desired. He also said that there were many tenants who were perfectly satisfied with the management of the factory, and that a few tenants who might have complained to Mahatmaji must have done so under instigation from others. After saying this he referred to an old cultivator aged 70 or 80 years and said that he was the most respected tenant in the whole locality. He asked Mahatmaji to listen to what he had to say. Mahatmaji asked the old man, "Have you any trouble with the factory ?" He said at once, "No, sir ! All the people are perfectly happy under the factory and they get all kinds of advantage from it." He added that the people had willingly taken settlement of the *zerait* lands. No sooner had he said this than the entire body of tenants present there began to fret and fume with rage and indignation. They began to shout, "This man is a traitor; he is a partisan of the factory; the sahib had tutored him;" and addressing the old man they said, "Why are you in this old age adding to your burden of sin by your falsehoods. Your time is now nearly up; remember God at least now and speak the truth." There was such a hubbub created there that it took a little time to restore quite. About 15 more tenants made statements similar to that of the old man. Thereafter Mahatmaji enquired of the other tenants and they repudiated what had been said by the old man. Mahatmaji told them that he had been informed by the manager that they had taken *hunda* settlements willingly and that if they did not like the *zerait* land they were at liberty to surrender it. No sooner had he said this than all the tenants shouted out in one voice. "We surrender the *zerait* lands, we don't want them, let the sahib cultivate what he can on them, we have no objection." This very much perturbed Mr. Holttum and he said. "If they do not like this he would make them grow indigo." Mahatmaji smiled and said, "Just a minute ago you had said that *hunda* settlement had no connection whatsoever with indigo and that by cultivating the *zerait* lands you would be able to make more profit than you were now getting. In these circumstances it is a matter both of profit and good name to you if you take back these lands and release the tenants from what they evidently consider to be a burden." Mr. Holttum only replied, "After all I have also to live."

The tenants had become so bold and fearless that they began to complain against Mr. Lewis in his presence. It was an extraordinary thing for Champaran. Who could have said before Mahatmaji's visit that the tenant of Champaran who used to conceal himself at the very sight of the factory *Jamadar*, who used to suffer all kinds of disgrace and oppression silently for fear of more and worse oppression coming if he complained about it, would in this way accuse the factory manager and the Sub-divisional Magistrate in their very faces ? We were all much struck by this change.

After the Sub-divisional Magistrate and Mr. Holttum had left, Mahatmaji asked use to take down the names of those who wished to surrender their *hunda* lands. We went on doing this upto the evening and still we could not finish it. We started from there at about 6 p.m. Mr. Holttum had enquired of Mahatmaji if he would have any objection to using his carriage. Mahatmaji accepted the offer after some hesitation and we returned in his carriage. We reached Bettiah at about 9 p.m.

Dhokraha and Loheria are two adjoining factories belonging to the same proprietor and Mr. Holttum was their manager. He used to live generally at Loheria. There was a great rush of tenants from these two factories at Bettiah on 17-5'-17. They came to surrender their *hunda* lands. Their names were taken down. Those of them who could read and write were asked to put down their signatures, while the thumb impression of illiterate persons was taken. Mahatmaji wrote a latter to Mr. Holttum, detailing all that had happened and he also sent the names of these tenants who had surrendered their lands. The readers must know that the entire rent for that current year had been already realized and in some of those lands there were crops standing; but the tenants were so anxious to surrender these *zerait* lands and to get rid of this *hunda* settlement that they surrendered their lands to the factory with the crops standing on them. About 500 tenants surrendered their *zerait* lands in this way within two days.

On the night of 18-5-'17 fire broke out in one of the houses of Dhokraha factory and it was burnt. The tenants came running to Mahatmaji and informed him that the factory people themselves had set fire to the factory to create an excuse for oppressing them. Mahatmaji immediately deputed Babu Vindhyabasiniprasad to proceed to the spot to find out the truth after a thorough

inspection and local inquiry. His report and the statements of the tenants were sent to the Government authorities.

We believe that the fire* was not due to the tenants. We knew that whatever the cause of the fire might be the planters would create a great noise about it. After reading the *Associated Press* message about the Olaha factory, Mahatmaji had written the following letter to Mr. Heycock on the 14th of May :

"Dear Mr. Heycock,

"I beg to refer you to the enclosed. All kinds of rumour have come before me. Pressure is being put upon me to make a statement. But I do not want to make any unauthorized statement. Will you kindly let me know for purposes of publication the damage by the fire, the nature of the out-work burnt, whether it was inhabited or otherwise protected and whether any connection has been shown between my presence in Champaran and the fire ?

"I am sending a special messenger who will await answer.

Bettiah, Yours sincerely,
14th May 1917 M.K. Gandhi"

Mr. Heycock replied as follows :

"Dear Mr. Gandhi,

"Your letter of the 14th May 1917. I am able to give you the following information :

"Olaha factory is an out-work of the Turkaulia concern. The buildings burnt down were the engine room, press house and cake-house. The value of the building has been roughly estimated at Rs. 20,000 but this is only a rough estimate. No manager or asst. manager is in residence at the out-work. There are, however, factory servants to look after the buildings. The out-work is situated about 20 miles south east of Motihari.

*This book was written in 1919. Since then I have had a confession from the man who was employed to burn this factory. The plan according to him was to burn the factory at midnight, to rush to the authorities, get large body of armed police immediately and, if possible, to have the whole village looted. The plan failed because the man who was entrusted with the cipher message could not deliver it in time.

"The fact that the buildings were burnt down shortly after you came to the district and that your visit of enquiry has caused considerable excitement etc., may possibly account for the rumours of all kinds which you say have come before you.

Motihari, Yours sincerely,
18th May 1917 W.B. Heycock"

At about 10 p.m. on the 17th of May, Mahatmaji was discussing some matters with us, when a man who called himself part-proprietor of a village Parsauni came to us. He said that his other co-sharers had leased out their shares to a factory, but he was not willing to ease out his share. The factory was, therefore, very much annoyed with him and putting him to all kinds of trouble. He had a small house in the village which was going to be looted on the following day. Mahatmaji at once deputed Professor Kripalani and the writer to proceed to the place to make an enquiry. The Police Sub-Inspector was also informed so that he might accompany us if he so desired. We started the same night. The village is about 30 or 35 miles from Bettiah and 8 or 9 miles from the nearest railway station. We alighted from the train at about 8 O'clock next morning and reached Parsauni at about 10 O'clock. The Sub-Inspector of Police of Bettiah did not accompany us. But he sent information to the *Thana* within whose jurisdiction the village was. The Sub-Inspector of the latter place arrived at the spot soon after us. We examined a large number of tenants. The bub-Inspector was present all along. After completing our enquiry and having talked to the people we started late in the evening and we reached the railway station at 11 p.m., and returned to Bettiah the following morning at 9.

The planters as well as the local officials were very much upset by all these activities and the picture of a serious disturbance which Mr. Lewis had drawn from his imagination became still more deeply coloured by these and the incidents that had taken place at Sarisawa bazaar. The planters and their supporters were trying their level best to show that Mahatmaji's work in Champaran was fraught with mischief and to have him and his co-workers removed from the District. At the same time they were trying to put pressure on the tenants to prevent them from

coming to Mahatmaji.

On the 20th of May 1917, Mahatmaji wrote a letter to the Dist. Magistrate Mr. Heycock and sent along with it the statements of tenants of Dhokraha and Belwa factories. It is worthwhile quoting the letter in full as it shows Mahatmaji's method of work, his unflinching determination, from faith in the justice of the cause and above all his principle of self-suffering and non-violence. The letter was as follows :

"Dear Mr. Heycock,

"I have hitherto refrained from bringing to your notice statements which have continued to stream in to the effect that the ryots are being prevented from coming in to me and that those who have come in have been subjected to all kinds of pin-pricks by the *Kothi Amals* add in some cases by the managers themselves. I have discounted some of the statements. I have taken down a few. But if what I have heard about the doings of the Belwa and Dhokraha concerns is true, it is calculated to end on one side at least the friendly spirit in which the inquiry has hitherto been carried on I am most anxious to continue and to increase the friendly spirit. I am straining every nerve so far as in me lies to so conduct my mission that nothing but good-will should be left behind, when its labours are finished. I send you the statements taken regarding the Belwa and Dhokraha concerns. If the statements are true they do not reflect any credit upon the concerns in question. I enclose too my letter to Mr. Holttum which was written before I heard of the fire and which was despatched before I took the statements of the Dhokraha men last evening after 6 p.m.

"I understand and even appreciate the feelings which are bound to fill those who are called upon to contemplate the prospect of having to forego huge incomes which they have hitherto been in the habit, for a long time, of receiving from their ryots. One cannot, therefore, mind any legitimate effort on their part to hold on to what they have considered as their right. But what is reported to have happened at the Belwa and Dhokraha *dehats* does not, in my opinion, fall under such category.

"It is a well-known fact that the desire of the planters

generally is that my friends and I should not carry on our work. I can only say that nothing but physical force from the Government or an absolute guarantee that the admitted or provable wrongs of the ryots are to stop for ever, can possibly remove us from the District. What I have seen of the condition of the ryots is sufficient to convince me that if we withdraw at this stage, we would stand condemned before man and God and, what is more important of all, we would never be able to forgive ourselves.

"But the mission is totally of peace. I connot too often give the assurance that I bear no ill-will against the planters. I have been told that is true of myself but my friends are fired with an anti-English feeling and that for them it is an anti-English movement. I can only say that I do not know a body of men who have less of that feeling than my friends. I was not prepared for the pleasant revelation. I was prepared for some degree of ill-will. I would have held it excusable. I donot know if I have not been guilty of it myself under circumstances which have appeared to me *most provoking*. But if I found that any of my associates were in the conduct of this mission actuated by any ill-will at all, I should dissociate myself entirely from them and insist upon their leaving the mission. At the same time the determination to secure freedom for the ryots from the yoke that is wearing them down is inflexible.

"Cannot the Government secure that freedom ? This is a natural exclamation. My answer is that they connot, in casese like this, without such assistance as is afforded to them by my mission. The Government machinery is designedly slow. It moves, must move, along the line of least resistance. Reformers like mysels who have no other are to grind but that of the reform they are handling for the time being specialize and create a force which the Goverenment must reckon with. Reformers may go wrong by being overzealous. indiscreet or indolent and ignorant. The Government may go wrong by being impatient of them or over-confident of their ability to do without them. I hope in this case neither catastrophe will take place and the grievances which I have already submitted and which are mostly admitted will be effectively redressed. Then the

planters will have no cause to fear or suspect the mission of which I have the honour to be in charge and they will gladly accept the assistance of volunteers who will carry on the work of education and sanitation among the villagers and act as links between them and the ryots.

"Pray excuse the length of this letter as also its argumentative character. I could not avoid it, if I was to place my true position before you. In bringing the two matters which have necessitated this communication I have no desire to seek legal relief. But I ask you to use such administrative influence as you can to preserve the friendly spirit which has hitherto prevailed between the *kothis* and my friends and myself.

"I do not wish to suggest that the *kothis* question are responsible for the fires. That is the suspicion of some of the ryots. I have talked to hundreds of them about the two fires. They say that the ryots are not responsible for them, that they have no connection with the mission. I readily accept the repudiation because we are incessantly telling the ryots that this is not a mission of violence or reprisals and that any such thing on their part can only delay relief. But if the *kothis* may not be held responsible for them, they may not seek to establish a connection between them and the mission. Fires have taken place before now and, mission or no mission, they will take place for ever. Neither party may blame the other without the clearest possible proofs.

"There is talk too about the life of the planters being in danger. Surely this cannot be serious talk. Any way the mission cannot render them less safe than they are. The character of the mission is wholly against any such activity. It is designed to seek relief by self-suffering, never by doing violence to the supposed or real wrong-doer. And this lesson has been inculcated among the ryots in season and out of season.

"Lastly, there is, I fear, ample proof of antimidation such as is describe in the statements hereto attached. Intimidation can only mean more trouble all round without meaning the slightest relief to the planters in the shape of retention of the present system.

"I seek such help as you can vouchsafe in the circumstances,

Anglo-Indian Press, the fire in two factories and the imaginary fear of a disturbance in the minds of local officers. We apprehended that there must be something wrong about this call. It was therefore necessary to proceed cautiously and to be prepared for all eventualities. Our party should be well organized and should be ready to face any untoward turn events might take. Plainly speaking we suspected that Mahatmaji might not be allowed to return from Ranchi. We discussed the future plan of action if that came to pass. Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya was wired to come to Patna for consultation. Mahatmaji wired to his wife who was in Calcutta to come and meet him at Ranchi. His youngest son Devadas Gandhi, who was at the Sabarmati Satyagraha Ashram was also telegraphed to come to Ranchi. The writer was deputed to Patna to consult the leaders there. On the second of June Mahatmaji reached Patna with Babu Brajakishoreprasad. Pandit Malaviya had already arrived on the previous evening. A conference was held and it was decided that if any action was taken against Mahatmaji then either Mr. Haque or Pandit Madan mohan Malaviya would take charge of the work in Champaran. A programme similar to that prepared on the 18th of April was again made. Correspondence with leaders of the country was started. The same day Mahatmaji and Babu Brajakishoreprasad left for Ranchi, while Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya returned to Allahabad.

The planters had left no stone unturned to get Mahatmaji and his assistants removed from Champaran and to render his work infructuous. On the 31st May the Muzaffarpur branch of the European Defence Association passed the following resolutions :

1. That the presence of Mr. Gandhi in his self-imposed mission has been accompanied by unrest and crime.
2. That his continued presence there is likely to be disastrous to the welfare of the Europeans in Champaran and the peace of the District.
3. That they request the European Central Association in Calcutta to press on the Government the absolute necessary, if they wish to maintain law and order in Champaran District, to have Mr. Gandhi and his assistants removed from there at once and also that there

is great fear of lawlessness spreading to the neighbouring Districts.

On the 3rd June 1917, the *Pioneer* published a long letter written by Mr. Irwin, the manager of the Motihari factory. Mr. Irwin had actually written the letter on the 23rd of May, but the *Pioneer* published it on the 3rd of June, just on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's interview with the Lieut.-Governor. It is necessary to say a word or two about Mr. Irwin here as he wrote several letters to the Press in connection with the enquiry, about which we have to say something at the proper place. Mr. W.S. Irwin is an old and powerful planter. He is the manager of the Motihari factory and has been connected with it for a long time. He was in a way the pioneer amongst the planters in the matter of taking enhencement agreements and realizing *tawan* from the tenants. He, it was who had taken legal advice about the *sharahbeshi* (enhencement) and *tawan* and carried on correspondence with the Government. It was in his factory that in 1906 trouble about these things at first arose. It is his boast that his tenants never go to courts against him. Very few of his tenants had dared to complain against *sharahbeshi* and *tawan* to the authorities. From these facts he wants to impress upon others that his tenants were contented and that there was no trouble. The tenants, however, have a different tale to tell. They say that Mr. Irwin's organization is so perfect and his method so effective that with all their sufferings the tenants dare not go to law courts. It was a *patwari* of this Mr. Irwin who had told Mahatmaji that a Sub-Inspector or a Magistrate was nothing as compared to his Sahib. Mr. Irwin in the letter which was published in the *Pioneer* of the 3rd of June, to show his impartiality in the matter wrote as follows :

"Very occasionally brief paragraphs appear in your columns alluding to Mr. Gandhi and his so-called mission in Champaran but it is more than evident you have no appreciation of the harm he is doing and has already succeeded in doing.

"When the local authorities first became aware of Mr. Gandhi's threatened visit, they very wisely and correctly took action to restrain him but, on appeal by him, this order was upset by the Provincial Government and Mr. Gandhi

was permitted to continue his mischievous intention. He wanted to go to a village in the Peepra factory "dihat" and thereby encourage the villagers some of whom were under trial for several assaulting the European sub-manager, but he was stopped by the police. Then when detained by the local authorities and awaiting the order of the Government he occupied himself in Motihari recording the *ex parte* statements of some hundreds of Peepra and Turkaulia concern ryots who were induced by his encourage to come to him. When Government orders were received revoking the earlier proceedings he passed on to Bettiah, but his doings in Motihari bore fruit and shortly after his departure an outwork of the Turkaulia concern was burnt down. I may here say parenthetically that of 20,000 ryots (more or less) not a dozen men attempted to go near Mr. Gandhi, and of these the majority went out of curiosity pure and simple and no serious charges of any kind were made. So in this matter I have no "personal" quarrel with Mr. Gandhi. Naturally his arrival in the Bettiah Sub-Division was objected to by both planters and officials and the former sent a deputation to Ranchi to try to get the Government to put an end to, or at any rate keep under some control Mr. Gandhi's activities. This resulted in the local officials and Mr. Gandhi being summoned by wire to attend a conference in Bankipore which ended in Mr Gandhi's being permitted to return and continue his doings now more uncontrolled than ever and clothed in the ryots' mind in the garment of recognition and approval by Government. He visited a village in the Dhokraha factory "dehat" the ryots of which in his presence and before the S.D.O. and factory manager, foully abused in Hindustani the factory head servant and while Mr. Gandhi was still in the neighbourhood, but not actually within sight, assaulted and grossly maltreated a most respectable old man, who, too agreed and infirm to walk, had to come in a cart to make statements in a factory's favour and finally two days or so later the factory office was set fire to and burnt down. There can be no possible doubt in any reasonable person's mind as to cause and effects in both this and Turkaulia incident. But everybody who deserves to be in a position to know, knows that the whole movement is meretricious and Champaran has

been selected for the exploitation of it for the following reasons : 1. There is practically only one proprietor (*malik*) in the whole District—The Bettiah Court of Wards estate, i.e., the Local Government. In Tirhut and Saran most villages are owned by several small shareholders, many residents, and an agitator who would venture to go in there and act, as he has been doing here would meet with short shrifts. The engineers of the movement have no desire to get up against the Maharaja of Darbhanga. 2. Champaran with its large community of European Zamindars is eminently the place to start with hopes of success a class agitation. Mr. Gandhi, I believe, is a well-intentioned philanthropist but he is a crank and fanatic and is too utterly obsessed with his partial success in South Africa and his belief that he has been ordained by Providence to a righter of wrongs. To be able to realize that, he is being made a cat's paw of by : (i) Pleaders and *Mukhtears* etc , who know that planters settle free, gratis and for nothing at least 75 per cent, of disputs among ryots which would otherwise bring grist to their mills: (ii) *Mahajans* and money lenders whose usurious dealings with ryots have been greatly checked and who cannot now, owing to the action of the planters, acquire the debtor's best lands without the consent of the landowners, and by (iii) Home Rule politicians who hope to demonstrate on the, for them, happy hunting ground of Champaran that officials and non-officials go hand in hand to appress the population and so to prove that the District and incidentally all India is being misgoverned under the British Raj.

"What do these people care for ryots save to make use of them for their own purpose ? For the protection of the property of the Champaran planters, one and 'probably only one step is essentially necessary and that is the removal of Mr. Gandhi from the District. The extreme forbearance of the planters has so far prevented the outbreak of any very serious disturbance, but unless Government can see its way to protecting them they will unavoidably be forced into taking the steps necessary for their own protection."

It need only be stated about this letter that Mr. Irwin's comment that not a dozen of his tenants had attempted to go near

Mr. Gandhi was wholly unfounded as we had by that time recorded the statements of some 300 of them.

The Anglo-Indian Press commenting on the European Defence Association resolutions, attacked the proposal for a non-official enquiry by "agitators", called on the Government to suppress their activities and, if necessary, appoint their own Commission of enquiry. The Indian Press throughout the country on the other hand, fully supported Gandhiji in all his activities, pointed to their significant implications of planter opposition to the enquiry and insisted on the enquiry being carried out.

15

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

While on the one hand this agitation was going on in the Press, Sir Edward Gait was holding discussions with Mahatma Gandhi on the other, regarding the situation in Champaran. We had all taken our respective places on the 4th June in were every minute expecting a message from Ranchi. We were being tossed about by a wave of speculation. Just as the Government officials had pictured to themselves an imaginary disturbance and had been taking steps to get Mahatma Gandhi and his party removed from Champaran, even so were we experiencing the effects of an imaginary order of externment. The feeling was not one of fear, but of a deep curiosity. The whole of the night of the 4th June was spent by us in these dreams and reveries. On the morning of the 5th, at about 8 o'clock, a telegraph peon was seen coming and we all ran towards him. We were all anxious to know what the telegram contained; but there was nothing definite in it. In only said, "Today's interview satisfactory, meeting again tomorrow." We waited the whole night for it, but none came. The anxiety on this day was not so keen, nor were we subject to evil thoughts to the same extent as on the previous day. But there was no peace of mind. The 6th of June also passed away in the same condition of suspense. On the 7th of June we received a telegram from Mahatmaji informing us that he would return from Ranchi on the 8th.

From the 4th to the 6th of June Mahatmaji was engaged in interviewing Sir Edward Gait and the members of his Executive

Council, as a result of which, it was decided that an Enquiry Committee should be appointed and that Mahatma Gandhi should be one of its members. The names of other members were also settled at the same time, but as their consent had not yet been obtained, it was decided not to publish their names until such consent was obtained. On his way to Ranchi Shrimati Kasturbai Gandhi and Shrijut Devadas Gandhi had met him at Asansol and accompanied him to Ranchi, Mahatmaji, Shrimati Gandhi, Devadasji and Babu Brajakishoreprasad arrived at Patna on the morning of the 7th of June. Pandit Malaviya was already there waiting for them. After meeting all friends Mahatmaji left Patna on the morning of the 8th and reached Bettiah the same afternoon.

The news had already reached Bettiah that Shrimati Gandhi was coming with Mahatmaji. There was a large crowd to welcome her at the station. She took her residence in another small room. The *Associated Press* representative at Patna somehow managed to get the news in spite of the Government prohibition and wired that a Commission was going to be appointed. This news was published in the papers of the 8th June. The Government seeing various inaccuracies in it issued the following communique on the 11th of June :

> "The attention of the Government of Bihar and Orissa has been drawn to a communication dated 7th June on the subject of agrarian situation in Champaran, which emanated from the Bankipore correspondent of the *Associated Press*. It was published in several newspapers of June 8th. The communication was made without the knowledge or authority of the Local Government and contained various incorrect and misleading statements. The Local Government intend to appoint a Committee to enquire into the relations existing between the landlords and the tenants of the Champaran District and will shortly announce its constitution and terms of reference."

On the 13th of June 1917, a Government communique announcing the appointment of a Committee of enquiry and its personnel was published.

On 31-5-'17 when Mahatma Gandhi was going to Ranchi, we were apprehending many things. On the 8th June, instead of

being interned at Ranchi, he returned to Bettiah with his wife, son and co-workers. What a tremendous change within these 8 days. He who had been summoned to Sir Edward Gait's presence almost as an accused, returned on this day as a member of a committee entrusted with the work of giving redress to the tenants of Champaran. The reader may very well ask what the reason of this was. A real and genuine desire to secure relief for the tenants and an equally genuine anxiety to avoid any thought of doing any injury to the planters, a readiness to suffer for his principles and for what he considered to be his duty, an unalterable faith in the power of truth and a complete absence of fear from worldly powers—these made such a tremendous change possible. To hold to these firmly is called *Satyagraha.*

The publication of the news of the Committee created a great stir among Anglo-Indian papers. In their issue of the 9th June the *Pioneer*, the *Statesman* and the *Englishman* said, as if in one voice, that the only proper course was to remove Mahatma Gandhi from Champaran, because his presence after the appointment of the Committee was no longer justified. They did not know that Mahatma Gandhi too was appointed a member of the Committee. On the 8th of June immediately after the receipt of information about the appointment of the Committee Mr. Alee Marsh, the Secretary of the European Association of Calcutta, wrote the following letter to the Government which also throws a flood of light on the previous activities of his Committee :

> "I have the honour to address you by direction of the Council of the European Association with reference to Mr. Gandhi's visit in Champaran District and the matters that have arisen in consequence of his presence. On the 3rd May last, I telegraphed you a copy of a telegram despatched to the Government of India regarding the grave situation in the Champaran District and on the 4th May I forwarded you a copy of letter No. 1575 addressed to the Government of India regarding the same matter.
>
> "My Council observe with great satisfaction the decision of your Government to appoint a Committee to enquire and investigate into the relations between landlords and tenants in the province of Bihar and Orissa.
>
> "My Council are of opinion that the terms of reference

should be as wide as possible, so as to comprise not merely the questions which have resulted in the appointment of the Committee but any which have actually proved a source of trouble in the past or may do hereafter. It is extremely important that so far as can possibly be now effected all grievances real and imaginary should be finally enquired into and removed.

"I am also directed to urge that the enquiry should be held in public and not in camera. Proceedings of this nature in camera invariably afford ground for criticism that there is something to be concealed from the public or that some person is being shelved. In a matter of this kind this Council consider that the public should be permitted to form its own opinion.

"My Council desire to impress on your Government that Mr. Gandhi having completed his self-appointed task of investigating the relation between the landlords and the tenants in the Champaran District and having submitted his report to you in his latter of May 13th, there is no further necessity for his presence in that District. Your Government are doubtless aware of the grave anxiety existing among the planting community that serious trouble may arise at any moment. Also that opinion is generally held by the same Committee that the continued presence of Mr. Gandhi and his entourage in Champaran is likely to precipitate serious trouble in various directions. My Council would, therefore, urge upon the Government as strongly as possible, that Mr. Gandhi and his entourage be required by Government to remove themselves from the Champaran District except in so far as Mr. Gandh's presence may be desired by the proposed Committee."

The *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta commented on this letter as follows :

"Now that the Bihar and Orissa Government have decided to appoint a small committee of enquiry to investigate the whole question of relation between the landlord and the tenant in the Province, it seems impossible that they can allow a roving Commission to an agitator who has to make his case good or stand discredited."

Unfortunately, for them, however, Mahatma Gandhi's presence was necessary even for the Enquiry Committee and the desire of the European Association that the enquiry should commence only after Mahatmaji had been removed could not be fulfilled. It was an irony of fate that the allegations made by the "roving" Commissioner were eventually found by the Committee to be true. The Government of Bihar issued a resolution on 10th of June regarding the appointment of the Commission and it was published in the papers of the 12th June. That resolution itself shows that the grievances of the tenants of Champaran were neither new nor were they the result of the machination of "agitators". It is necessary to quote that resolution in its entirety. It was as follows :

"(1) On various occasions during the past fifty years the relations between the landlords and tenants and the circumstances attending the growing of indigo in the Champaran District have been the cause of considerable anxiety. The conditions under which indigo was cultivated when the industry was flourishing required re-adjustment, when it declined simultaneously with a general rise in the prices of food grains, and it was partly on this account and partly owing to other local causes that disturbances broke out in certain indigo concerns in 1908. Mr. Gourlay was deputed by the Government of Bengal to investigate the causes of the disturbances and his report and recommendations were considered at a series of conferences presided over by Sir Edward Baker and attended by local officers of Government and representatives of the Bihar Planters' Association.

"The result of these discussions revised the conditions for the cultivation of indigo in a manner calculated to remove the grievances of the ryots. The revised conditions were accepted by the Bihar Planters' Association.

"(2) In 1912 a fresh agitation arose connected not so much with the conditions under which indigo was grown, as with the action of certain factories which were reducing their indigo manufacture and taking agreements from

their tenants for the payment in lieu of indigo cultivation of a lump sum in temporarily leased villages or of an increase of rent in villages under permanent lease. Numerous petitions on the subject were presented from time to time to the local officers and to the Government and petitions were at the same time filed by ryots of villages in the north of the Bettiah sub-division in which indigo had never been grown, complaining of the levy of abwab or illegal additions to rent, by their lease holders, both Indian and European. As the issues raised by all these petitions related primarily to rent and tenancy conditions and as the revisions of settlement of the District was about to be undertaken in the course of which the relations existing between the landlords and tenants would come under detailed examination, it was thought advisable to await the report of the Settlement Officers before passing final orders on the petitions. The revisions settlement was started in the cold weather of 1913. On the 7th April 1915, a resolution was moved in the local Legislative Council asking for the appointment of a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into the complaints of the ryots and to suggest remedies. It was negatived by a large majority, including 12 out of 16 non-official members of the Council present, on the ground that the appointment of such a Committee at that stage was unnecessary, as the Settlement Officers were engaged in the decision of the questions at issued and an additional enquiry of the nature proposed would merely have the effect of further exacerbating the relations of landlord and tenant; which were already feeling the strain of the settlement operations.

"(3) The settlement operations have been now completed in the northern portion of the District, and are approaching completion in the remainder and a mass of evidence regarding agricultural condition and the relations between landlords and tenants has been collected. A preliminary report on the complaints of the tenants in the leased villages in the north of the Bettiah sub-division in which no indigo is grown has been received, and

action has already been taken to prohibit the levy of illegal cesses and in the case of the Bettiah Raj to review the terms of the leases on which the villages concerned are held. As regards the complaints of the ryots in other parts of the District the final report of the Settlement Officer has not yet been received, but recent events have again brought into prominence the whole question of the relations between landlords and tenants, and in particular the taking of agreements from the ryots for compensation, or for enhanced rent in return for the abandonment of indigo cultivation. In these circumstances and in reference to representations which have been received from various quarters that the time has come when an enquiry by a joint body of officials and non-officials might materially assist the Local Government in coming to a decision on the problems which have arisen, the Lieut-Governor in Council has decided without waiting for the final report of the settlement operations to refer the question at issue to a Committee of Enquiry on which all interests concerned will be represented.

"(4) The following Committee has accordingly been appointed with the approval of the Government of India: President : Mr. F. G. Slay, C.S.I., Commissioner Central Proviences Members : The Hon'ble Mr. L.C. Adami, I.C.S., Superintendent and Remembrancher of Legal Affairs, B. & O.; the Hon'ble Raja Hariharprasad Narayansingh,* Member of the B. & O. Legislative Council; The Hon'ble Mr. D.J. Reid, Member of the B. & O. Legislative Council; Mr. G. Rainy, I.C.S., Deputy Secretary in the Finance Department of the Government of India; and Mr. M.K. Gandhi. Secretary; M.E.L. Tanner I.C'S.,Settlement Officer in South Bihar.

"(5) The duty of the Committee will be : (a) to enquire into the relations between landlords and tenants in Champaran District including all the disputes arising out of the manufacture and cultivation of indigo; (b) to examine evidence on these subjects already available, supplementing it by such further enquiry, local and otherwise, as

* It is necessary to state here that on account of the ill-health of the Hon'ble Raja Hariharprasad Narayansingh, Raja Krityanandsingh, B.A. of Banaily was appointed in his place.

they may consider desirable, and (c) to report their conclusions to the Government stating the measures they recommend to remove any abuses or grievances which they may find to exist.

"The Lieut-Governor-in-Council desires to leave the Committee a free hand as to the procedure they will adopt in arriving at the facts. The Committee will assemble about the 15th July and will, it is hoped, complete their labours within three months."

The planters, however, were not at all satisfied with the appointment of Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. J.V. Jameson, whose name has already been mentioned, wrote the following letter which was published in the *Statesman* of 22nd June, 1917 :

"With regard to Mr. Gandhi's appointment to the Committee it is difficult to see what his qualifications for the post consist of. He is a complete stranger to the Province and ignorant of its complicated system of land tenure. He came to the District frankly prejudiced in his views on the question while he professed his intention of making an impartial enquiry. He has spent a considerable time at the head of a band of agitators who by means of ex-aggerated stories as to his position and authority have attempted to induce the ryots to break their agreements and to ignore the decisions of the Settlement and Civil Courts and have succeeded in raising a considerable amount of racial ill-feeling. As his and his colleagues' activities are very important factors in the present relations between landlords and tenants they must inevitably come within the scope of this Committee's enquiry, and it would surely be more fitting that he should be required to justify his actions and the statements and recommendations which he has already submitted to Government, the very point on which this Committee is required to report, rather than that he should be put in the ludicrous position of judging his own case and reporting on the very conclusions and recommendations which he has himself put forward."

The allegation of Mr. Jameson that Mahatma Gandhi came

to Champaran with a prejudice is, of course, unfounded. Whatever opinion Mahatmaji formed about Champaran was the result of his observations and the information which he gathered on the spot. His preliminary report would show how he had mastered the situation and the report of the Enquiry Committee shows that his conclusions were all literally true.

16

THE SITTING OF THE ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

Between the appointment of the Enquiry Committee and the commencement of its sittings Mahatmaji decided to pay a visit to Bombay and his assistants were also given a few days' holiday to go home. The Committee was to commence its work only on the 15th July and after the publication of the Government resolution, there being no further need, the work of recording the statements of ryots was stopped from 12th June. On the 16th of June Mahatmaji went away to Bombay and his assistants removed from Bettiah to Motihari and began to sort the evidence which should be place before the Committee. Till then the full statements of more than 8,000 tenants had been recorded under the personal supervision of Mahatma Gandhi. It has been stated above that there were 2,841 villages and tenants from no less than 850 villages had made statements which were against as many as 60 factories. Over and above these statements we had collected a large number of documents many of which were judgments of Courts. So long as the assistants were engaged in recording statements, they did not get much time to study the documents. When the recording of statements was stopped, we began to study the documents carefully. We had to decide after careful scrutiny and selection what witnesses and what documents should be produced before the Committee. Even after the 12th of June, when we stopped recording statements, tenants continued to come in large numbers. They used to be told that no more statements would be recorded and their grievances would be considered by the Committee. When the tenants learned that statements were not recorded, many of them sent their complaints by post. The police continued to bestow their attention on us even after the appointment of the Committee. Some police officer made a report to the Government that statements were being taken even after the 12th June. This was of

course untrue and Babu Brajakishoreprasad who was in charge of affair in Mahatmaji's absence repudiated it. All this kept us engaged for about a fortnight and Mahatmaji returned from Bombay to Motihari on the 28th June '17. Mahatmaji brought with himself Dr. Hari Shrikrishna Deva, the Secretary of the Servants of India Society to help him in the mission.

On his return Mahatmaji also devoted himself to the study of the evidence. Before the commencement of the work the Committee was to hold a preliminary meeting at Ranchi to settle its programme of work and such other preliminaty matters. Mahatmaji and Babu Brajakishoreprasad accordingly left Motihari for Ranchi on the 5th July and arrived there on the 7th. The Committee met on the 11th July and Mahatmaji returned to Motihari on the 13th July. It was settled that the Committee should sit at Bettiah from the 17th July. Bettiah was preferred to Motihari evidently for the reason that it being the Headquarters of the Raj, it offered better conveniences for the comforts of the guests who come for the Committee. The European members of the Committee were lodged at the guest-house of the Raj, while the Rajasaheb of Banaily stayed in the Raj palace. Mahatmaji and his party took their lodgings at their old place, the *dharamshala* of Babu Hazarimal. With the exception of Mahatmaji, all the members of the Committee reached Bettiah on the 14th July. It had been announced that the Committee would hold its sittings from about the 15th of Jully at Bettiah, Motihari and other places and any one who wanted to say anything about Champaran must send his written note to the secretary of the Committee. This notice had been published in the newspapers and its copies were hung up in the Court premises. The tenants of the whole District had thus come to know that the enquiry would commence at Bettiah from the 15th July.

It is difficult to guess what hopes, what apprehensions possessed the minds of Champaran tenants. They instinctively felt on the advent of Mahatmaji that their grievances would go and when they saw that even the Government had agreed to appoint an Enquiry Committee of which Mahatma Gandhi was to be one of the members, the hope became doubly confirmed and large crowds of tenants assembled at Bettiah on the 15th July. In the streets, in the market place, in the spacious *maidan* of the town of Bettiah—wherever one turned one's eyes, one saw groups of tenants. It

looked as if there was to be a big fair. The *dharamshala* where Mahatmaji was staying was always full of visitors.

The number of tenants increased on the 16th and it is estimated that not less than ten thousand tenants were present at Bettiah on that day. Mahatmaji was busy studying the papers, supplied by the Committee; his assistants were equally busy and had no time to attend to the tenants, who were anxious to have a look at Mahatmaji. The Committee could not commence its work on the 15th July. Mahatmaji was anxious that the tenants should not lose heart in any way. He accordingly came out in the afternoon of the 16th. As soon as Mahatmaji came out, the crowd swelled in number and the spacious garden and the compound of the *dharamshala* were filled with men. In a short speech, he explained to them that the Committee had been appointed to redress their grievances, that they should not go in large numbers to the meeting place of the Committee, and that if they had to make any complaint they should do so before Mahatmaji's assistants. Babu Brajakishoreprasad also explained this matter to the tenants. After Mahatmaji's speech the tenants went back perfectly satisfied.

It has already been said that a notice had been published inviting intendiug witnesses to submit their statements to the Committee. In response to it the Bihar Planters' Association, the managers of two factories, 25 tenants, Mr. J.T. Whitty, the Manager of the Bettiah Raj, Mr. J.A. Sweeney, the Settlement Officer, Mr. E.H. Lewis, the S.D.O. of Bettiah, Mr. L.F. Morshead, the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, Mr. E.H. Johnstone, an Ex-S.D.O. of Bettiah, submitted statements. The Bihar Planters' Association had been particularly requested to represent their case, but they replied that they had nothing particular to say.

Examination of witnesess commenced at Bettiah on the 17th of July. The Committee used to meet in the hostel of the Bettiah Raj school. On behalf of the planters Mr. Pringle Kennedy, a well-known lawyer of Muzaffarpur, was watching the proceedings. Mahatmaji's assistants and tenants were admitted to the Committee on tickets. In spite of all our efforts the crowd did not diminish. The roads were full of men. Two of our party were deputed to maintain order among the crowd. Although policemen in their uniforms were not much in evidence, they were posted in

plain clothes. The Committee began its proceedings exactly at 11 a.m. The *Associated Press of India*. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and the *Bengalee* had deputed their special correspondents to report the proceedings.

Mr. Sweeney was the first witness and his examination took the whole day. On the 18th July Mr. Lewis was examined in the fore-noon and Mr. Whitty in the afternoon On the 19th July Srijut Rajkumar Shukla and Sant Raut, who had once been a clerk under a factory and Khendarprasad Rai were examined on behalf of the tenants. There was no sitting of the Committee on the 20th. On the 21st July the proprietor and Manager of Malahia factory, Mr. W.J. Ross and Mr. H. Gale, the Manager of the Byreah factory gave their evidence. On the 23rd July Mr. C. Still, the Manager of Sathi factory and Mr. A.C. Ammon, the Manager of the Belwa factory, deposed before the Committee. The sixth sitting of the Committee was to take place at Motihari on the 25th July and Mahatmaji with his assistants accordingly came to Motihari on the night of the 23rd July.

At Motihari, too, the crowd of tenants was as large as at Bettiah. The Committee met in the office of the District Board on the 25th July at 11 a.m. and examined Mr. W.B. Heycock, the Collector of Champaran, Mr. J.V. Jameson as the representative of the Planters' Association and Mr. E.H. Hudson, the Manager of the Rajpore factory. On the 26th July Mr. W.S. Irwin, the Manager of the Motihari factory whom the readers know already was examined. After Mr. Irwin's examination the members of the Committee returned to Bettiah. The 27th of July was an off-day, and on the 28th the members of the Committee visited and held local enquiry at the Parsa factory.

It may be added here that no information used to be given to tenants about the visit of the Committee to their villages so that the "agitator" might not get an opportunity, as alleged by the planters, of tutoring the people of the locality visited by the Committee. The fact is there was nothing to tutor them about. In whichever direction the motor cars carrying the members turned a crowd collected and the moment they reached any particular factory, the news of their arrival spread with electric speed and thousands and thousands of tenants assembled in no time. The factory managers used to be informed beforehand so that they might keep their papers, registers, etc. in readiness for inspection by

the Committee. The Committee visited the Kuria factory and its villages on the 29th July. During these visits the papers of the factory used to be perused, statements of planters recorded and tenants examined. It is believed that what the members saw and heard during these tours made a deep impression on them.

The Committee met at Bettiah on the 30th July and on that day Mr. F. Granville, the Manager of the Madhubani factory and Mr. W.W. Broucke, its proprietor, were examined. Some members of the Committee visited some villages of Malahia factory and examined its papers. Similarly on the 21st local inspection was held in the villages of Dhokraha factory. On the night of the 31st Mahatmaji with some of his assistants went to Motihari. The 1st of August was again an off-day and on the 2nd the Committee visited the Rajpore factory. Mr. Hudson, its Manager, had informed his tenants of the visit, and about 5 to 6 thousand of people had assembled there. On the 3rd of August the Peepra factory was inspected and on the 4th the Committee visited Turkaulia. At these factories too 3 to 4 thousand people were present. On the same day Mahatmaji saw Mr. Irwin at his factory and on the 5th he visited a village of his named Rajpur Chhitali, with his consent and returned to Bettiah by the afternoon train. On the 6th Rajghat Hardia factory was visited. On the 14th August 1917 Mr. Jameson was again examined as the Manager of the Jalaha factory. No more evidence was recorded after this. Mahatmaji, however, placed before the Committee the statements of a number of tenants and a great many judgements of courts, which might throw light on the subject matter of the enquiry.

It may be stated here that in the days on which the Committee did not examine witnesses or visit villages, there used to be sessions of it for considering the evidence already recorded. There were several sittings of this nature. What used to take place in those sittings is not known to outsiders; but it became a matter of public knowledge later on, that to one of these sittings Mr. Hill of Turkaulia, Mr. Norman of Peepra and Mr. Irwin of Motihari were invited and an attempt was made to bring about an amicable settlement between them and their tenants regarding *sharahbeshi* (enhancement).

It is also necessary to state here that Mahatmaji agreed to a reduction in *sharahbeshi* instead of demanding its total cancellation. There were many difficulties in the way of tenants. They had

with their eyes open executed these enhancement agreements although it was under coercion. The burden of proving that these agreements had been executed under fraud or coercoin was on them. The Settlement Officer had held most of these agreements to be valid and the rent fixed by these agreements was entered in the record of rights. Under Section 103 of the Bengal Tenancy Act the Court is bound to presume the record of rights to be correct and the onus of showing that it was wrong was on the tenants. Although out of the nine test cases fought in Turkaulia five had been decided in favour of the tenants and only four in favour of the factory, these cases had cost a great deal and given much trouble to the tenants. On the one hand, the factories were rich and powerful, their managers able and alert, their papers were kept and arranged; on the other, the tenants were poor and weak and uneducated and they had hardly any papers. God alone knows what would have been the result of this unequal fight if it had to be decided in Court. But more than anything else, if suits had to be instituted to cancel these enhahcement agreements, then about fifty thousand such suits would have to be brought. The cases which the planters would have lost would surely have been carried to the High Court. But what Mahatmaji felt most was that if this matter was not settled by the Committee and the tenants were driven to the necessity of going to Court, then ill-feeling between the tenants and planters would rise to such a pitch that they would become implacable enemies. What he was anxious about was that the trouble of the tenants should disappear and friendship established between the two parties, and their relation should be such that each should wish well of the other. Both should have their rights and non any ill-will against the other. But how was all this to be achieved without an amicable settlement ? It was for these reasons that Mahatmaji and the members of the Committee were anxious that there should be a compromise.

After several private meeting and Mr. Jameson's examination on the 14th August 1917, the work of the Committee for the time being came to a close and the next sitting was fixed to be held at Ranchi in September. The members of the Committee dispersed to their respective places and Mahatmaji also started for Ahmedabad on the 16th August 1917, leaving Babu Ramnavmiprasad and the writer in Champaran, the other members of Mahatmaji's party going home.

On the 22nd September, Mahatmaji returned from Ahmedabad to Ranchi. Babu Brajakishoreprased also went there. Soon after his arrival there Mahatmaji had an attack of malarial fever, but in spite of it he went on working in the Committee. There were several sittings of the Committee to settle the report and Mr. Irwin and some other planters were wired to go to Ranchi to settle the question of *sharahbeshi*. After several days' discussion the members of the Committee signed a unanimous report on the 3rd of October and submitted it to the Government on the 4th of October. After considering the report, the Government published their resolution on the 18th of October. It need only be stated here that the Government accepted almost all the recommendations of the Committee.

From Ranchi Mahatmaji returned to Champaran and stopped there till the 12th of October. Groups of tenants used to come to see Mahatmaji and to enquire about the recommendations of the Committee. Mahatmaji told them the pricipal points and they were satisfied.

The students of Bihar had elected Mahatmaji as the President of the Biharee Students' Conference which was to be held at Bhagalpur on the 15th October. Mahatmaji started from Motihari for Bhagalpur and went to Bombay from there. About this time Babu Janakdhariprasad, Vakil of Muzaffarpur, came and took charge of the office at Motihari and began to live there.

17

THE REPORT OF THE CHAMPARAN AGRARIAN ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

It has already been mentioned above that the members of the Enquiry Committee had submitted their Report to the Government on the 4th October 1917, and the latter having accepted almost all the recommendations had published their Resolution on the 18th October 1917. The following is the gist of the Committee's recommendations which were accepted by the Government and which were published in their Resolution :

(1) The *tinkathia* system, whether for growing indigo or any other crop, should be completely abolished.

(2) If any agreement be executed for growing indigo it should be done on the following conditions :

(a) The agreement should be voluntary.
(b) Its term should not exceed 3 years.
(c) The selection of field in which indigo is to be grown should rest with the ryots.
(d) The rate of sale of indlgo plants should be settled by the ryots according to their choice.
(e) The price of indigo plants should be paid on weight. If the ryots agree, the plant instead of being, weighed on a scale its weight may be appraised by arbitrators.

(3) In Motihari and Peepra concerns the enhancement should be reduced by 26 p.c., and in Turkaulia concern by 20 p.c.

(a) In Jalaha and Sirni factories the enhancement would be reduced as in Motihari and Peepra.
(b) The tenants in whose record of right the *tinkathia lagan* has been mentioned will have to pay enhancement on their rent in accordance with the above proportion.
(c) The Rajghat factory has not claimed any indigo *lagan*. The ryots of that factory have executed *sattas* for growing indigo on condition that no enhancement would be made in their rental. Hence, the factory did not apply for enhancement before the Settlement authorities. The ryots of that locality want to give up indigo now. Hence an opportunity should be given to the said concern to apply for enhancement.

(4) The ryots who have paid *tawan* (either in cash or through hand-notes) to the factories will get back one fourth of it from term. In those villages which have been given lease to the factory recently the entire amount of *tawan* would be returned to the ryots. The Bettiah Court of Wards will not realize the enhancement *jama* from them

for a period of 7 years.

(5) The realization of abwab is altogether illegal. In future the ryots should not pay any amount to the Zamındars in excess of what is entered in their *khatian* or Record of Rights.

(6) It is illegal to realize any fee for mutation of name of an heir of a ryot. In other cases such fee should be realized on a fixed scale. The Board of Revenue would be informed that it should consider about fixing of such a scale for mutation in the Bettiah Raj and the *mokarridars* should also be asked to realize fee on the same scale.

(7) The *charsa-mahal* should be abolished in the Bettiah Raj, but no final orders should be issued in this connection till this matter is fully enquired into in the Ramnagar Raj.

(8) It is illegal to issue licence for selling kerosine oil and this system should be altogether abolished.

(9) In the Bettiah Raj the tenants can purchase half the share in timber on payment of proper price to the *malik*, but if in any *elaka* it may be apprehended that trees would be cut away (in large numbers) the Manager of the Bettiah Raj may limit the number of petitions of ryots in this respect.

(10) The Zamindars, *mokarridars* and the lessees should be informed that they should keep sufficient *parti* and grazing grounds for cattle in their *elaka*.

(11) It is illegal to impose and realize fines from the tenants. The ryots should be informed about it and the Zamindars, *mokarridars* and the lessees should be prohibited from realizing the same.

(12) The term of a cart-*satta* should not exced 5 years and the agreement about it should be voluntary.

(13) Labour should be voluntary.

(14) In connection with the recommendation of the Committee about issuing receipt for payment of each *kist* or instalment of rent the Government would prescribe a form, if possible, for the same.

(15) The District Board would be informed to keep direct management of the pounds as an experimental measure

and not to lease them out to factories or other lessees.

It should be added that immediately on the publication of the report and the Government Resolution thereon on the 18th October 1917, a notice was distributed throughout the District on behalf of the Government containing for the information of the tenants, a summary of the recommendations of the Committee.

This annoyed the planters very much and Mr. Irwin of Motihari raised a great hue and cry in the Press, which will be dealt with in detail hereafter. The *Pratap,* a Hindi newspaper of Cawnpore, had before Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in Champaran written a series of articles and had at one time issued a notice inviting all concerned to supply it with materials for a book on the grievances of the tenants of Champaran. In those days the policy of the Government was altogether different and the distribution of the notice had been stopped by it. From the same Press a booklet which was a sort of a commentary on the Government notices was now issued under the title of *Champaran ka Uddhar* and large numbers of its copies were sold in Champaran, carrying the news of their emancipation to almost every house. The planters complained that this booklet was being distributed on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi, but it was, of course, not true and Mahatmaji repudiated the charge. The result of all this was that there was hardly any place in the whole District where the recommendations of the Committee were not known. The tenants could now fully realize that through the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi their evil days were over and they could now sleep soundly in their homes and they could now shout with a full throat, *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai.*

18

PLANTERS UNEASY

Even before the report of the Committee was published, Mr. Irwin of the Motihari factory had managed to obtain information about its contents; and on the 7th of October 1917 he wrote a long letter to the *Englishman,* and the *Statesman* which may be summarized as follows :

"The Committee invited me and the Managers of Peepra and Turkaulia at Bettiah and advised us to enter into a compromise about *sharahbeshi.* I agreed to accept a reduction in the enhancement by 25 p.c., on the condition that the *tawan* would be left untouched. I showed to them that by reducing the enhancement by 25 p.c., there would be a loss of Rs. 13,000 in the annual income of my concern alone. But in spite of this Mr. Gandhi did not accept our terms and insisted on a reduction of 40 p.c. There was a similar talk at Ranchi and after much higgling I agreed to reduce the *sharahbeshi* by 26 p.c., but there was absolutely no talk about *tawan.* It now appears from the report of the Committee that 25 p.c., of *tawan* will have also to be refunded. The result is that I alone shall have to refund Rs. 80.000."

He further stated :

"That our representative signed a report of this sort is a matter which will have to be settled with him. But I hereby absolutely decline to submit to any treatment of this kind and I as publicly as possible now revoke, repudiate and withdraw the concession of 25 p.c., of the *sharahbeshi* from the beginning of the coming year and will, if obliged to spend this money in fighting this to finish."

The letter of Mr. Irwin was published in the *Statesman* of the 21st and the *Englishman* of the 22nd October. The Government criticized it very severely in its communique of the 23rd October and repudiated the charges made against the President and the members of the Committee. The Government not distinctly said :

"The Lieut.-Governor-in-Council is unable to believe the allegations made by Mr. Irwin that the Committee obtained his consent to the reduction of *sharahbeshi* by leading him distinctly to understand that it (*tawan*) would not be interfered with."

On the 24th of October Mr. Irwin published another latter in which he charged Mahatma Gandhi with having shown to the

S.D.O. of Bettiah a letter of the Lieutenant-Governor, authorizing Mahatmaji to inform the tenants of the recommendations of the Committee. He further charged the Local Government with partiality for the tenants. It need hardly be stated that the charge against Mahatmaji was wholly unfounded as he had never shown any such letter to Mr. Lewis, and the Government was only doing its duty by the tenants.

It may further be stated that Mr. Irwin had written in his first letter that Mr. Rainy, who was a member of the Committee, and who had formely been a Collector of Champaran as Collector advised the planters in the matter of *tawan*. This statement was reiterated by an anonymous planter, who wrote a letter to the Press under pseudonym of "Old Champaran." He wanted to know from Mr. Rainy, how Mr. Rainy, having advised the realization of *tawan*, could sign a report recommending refund of part of the same.

On the 25th of October Mr. Irwin returned to the charge and criticizing the Government note wrote as follows :

> "I would like to know if His Honour has made any enquiries from the only people in a position to say whether my allegation is true or not, viz., the managers of Turkaulia Ltd., and Peepra who, with Messrs. Rainy, Reid and myself, were the only persons present at the preliminary discussion."

On the 2nd of November 1917, Mr. Jameson wrote a long letter to the *Statesman*, in which he severely criticized the proceedings of the Committee and said that *tawan* had been realized with the consent of Mr. Rainy. He further said that as in 1909 after Mr. Gourlay's report Sir Edward Baker had held a private conference of the planters and settled the whole disputes by enhancing the price of indigo, so also if any changes or modifications were necessary, the Government ought to have quickly sent for the planters and settled the matter with them. But from the way in which the Government had acted in not stopping Mr. Gandhi's enquiry, it was evident that the Government did not want to do justice to the planters who had lost all confidence in it. He added. "The Government would have retained the confidence of the planting community had it shown itself genuinely anxious

to deal honestly with the whole question on its merits and to allay the unrest caused by its mistaken policy."

The Government for once wanted to do justice to the tenants and this was the result !

It is necessary to point out here that Mr. Irwin's statement regarding *tawan* was not correct and he was probably under a misapprehension. The Government held an enquiry into the matter. Mr. Norman, the Manager of the Peepra Factory, whom Mr. Irwin had mentioned in his letter wrote as follows on the 27th of October 1917 :

> "To the best of my recollections and it is my firm impression that the question of *tawan* was never mentioned or referred to in any way at either of the two committee meetings I have attended; but personally I was under no misunderstanding about the Committee's idea regarding the refund of 25 p.c. as I was told they intended recommending this refund in a conversation at Bettiah just before the Committee meeting there which Hill, Irwin and I attended. It is my impression that both Hill, and Irwin were told the same as I was . . . . I wrote to Hill and Irwin when I was in Ranchi in August last . . . . I asked Mr. Sly if the *tawan* question would be any way influenced by what was settled or *sharahbeshi* and he informed me that *tawan* was an entirely different matter and whatever was settled regarding *sharahbeshi* would in no way affect their decision about *tawan*."

Mr. Reid, who was the planters' representative on the Committee wrote on the 1st of November as follows :

> "I am extremely surprised to read Mr. Irwin's assertion that assurances were given that the 26 p.c. *sharahbeshi* reduction would not be applied to *tawan*. On the contry I have the clearest recollection that when Mr. Irwin came to Bettiah, he himself asked me if anything had been decided about *tawan* showing that he understood that the consultation with the three planters only referred to *sharahbeshi*. Moreover, I told him that the Committee had decided to recommend a 25 p.c. refund of *tawan*. He strongly disapproved but finally said that he would prefer to pay the money to Raj and not to the ryots. I told him that the matter had been finally settled

by the Committee and I could do nothing further. All this was at Bettiah. When he came to Ranchi the *tawan* question was never mentioned."

Regarding the allegation made by Mr. Irwin, Mr. Jameson and an anonymous planter that Mr. Rainy had advised the realization of *tawan* the Government held an enquiry and Mr. Rainy wrote in reply as follows :

"It is not true that *tawan* was taken by him after consultation with me and on may advice. Had he said that it was taken with my knowledge and without interference from me, he would have been correct. He never asked for my advice nor did I advise him."

He further wrote that whatever correspondence he had with the planters in this connection he forwarded to the Government and communicated the Government reply them. As a Collector he said he could not have done anything else and in his personal capacity he offered no advice. It may also be stated here that on the 7th of November 1917, Mr. Irwin wrote a letter to the *Statesman* which was published in its issue of 14th of November 1917 in which he admitted that after enquiry from Messrs. Hill and Norman he had found that he was mistaken, regarding *tawan*; but that he had never agreed to a refund of *tawan* and that his agreement to the reduction of *sharahbeshi* was subject to the condition that he would not have to refund *tawan.*

The readers must have gathered some impression regarding the uneasiness caused by the report among the planters. Many letters and articles were published in the Anglo-Indian Press against the recommendations of the Committee and an anonymous writer, XYZ wrote to the *Statesman* on the 8th of November threatening that after the action which the Government had taken, no one would care to accept leases from the Bettiah Raj. One Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie who had at one time been a planter in Champaran wrote as follows from Darjeeling :

"The Government of Bihar have employed the most unheared of methods to uproot respect for Bihar planters in ryots' minds by their insulting procedure of scattering broadcast pamphlets in the vernacular among an ignorant peasant population most

unjustly putting planters in the wrong.

"The action will have much more serious results than Sir E. Gait anticipates and he and his colleagues and the members of the so-called Commission should be held collectively and individually responsible for any bloodshed that may ensue. Will the Bihar Government think for one moment that the planters will accept without question the arbitrary findings of the Commission ? Will the European Defence Association see this injustice done to a section of their own community ? I trow not."

On the 12th of November Mr. J.M. Wilson, the Secretary of the Bihar Planters' Association sent to the *Statesman* for publication the opinion of the planters' legal advisor. It was published in its issue of the 18th November 1917.

It may be summarized thus :

"It is doubtful if the Bihar Government has got the power to take away the right about the *tinkathia*, possessed by the platers. The contract which has been in existence can only be broken with the consent of both the parties. But without their consent the notice issued by the Government can have no effect. It is more than 3 years that *tawan* money was realized and the same cannot be realized through court. Hence to take them back from the planters and pay them to the ryots is equivalent to extortion."

Someone under the *nomdeplume* of 'Solicitous' wrote a letter on the 20th of November to the *Statesman* in which, commenting on the letter of Mr. Mackenzie he advised the European Association to take action in the matter in as much as what had happened to the planters of Champaran today might happened to the Englishmen elsewhere tomorrow. A similar letter from some Englishman was also published in the *Statesman* of 24th November in which he attacked Mahatma Gandhi, the Government of Bihar and the Committee and supported Mr. Irwin's opinion regarding *tawan* and praised the planters. One gentleman under the name of 'Ruat Caelum wrote the following letter which was published in the *Statesman* of 2nd December in which he gave a crushing reply to the various attacks made on the Committee :

"If I have understood the writer of the article correctly his position is that *Status-quo-ante-Gandhi* in Champaran should be restored, because, (1) it pays the ryot to grow indigo, (2) the indigo planter is a good, considerate landlord, (3) all planters and their relatives of military age are fighting for the empire, (4) certain planters served Bettiah Raj many years ago. To take these in reverse order, most people acquainted with the facts who are not planters, would think regarding the fourth that the planters, in question got an ample *qoid pro quo*. The third hardly appears to me apposite and the second would be generally admitted to be true, if a proviso is added "so long as such conduct does not interfere with his own interest." Some would add the rider that the planter is bound to behave thus in his own interest. The real crux lies in the first. Either the taking of *tawan* was a highly discreditable transaction in which planter made use of his influence and superior knowledge, to extract a large sum from the ryot for a release which was worth nothing, or it does not pay the ryot to grow indigo at the rate fixed by the Bihar Planters' Association. I have no doubt that the latter is the correct answer .... As for Sly Committee's recommendation with respect to *tawan* there must be many who were surprised at the moderation."

It is the opinion of many persons that this letter was written by some high placed Englishman. While on one hand, the planters and their supporters were thus carrying on an agitation in the Press, on the other, they were running down the tenants in various cases to bend them. The Government of Bihar introduced the Champaran Agrarian Bill into the Bihar Legislative Council on 29th November 1917.

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THE CHAMPARAN AGRARIAN ACT

On the 29th of November the Hon'ble Mr. Maude introduced the Champaran Agrarian Bill into the Legislative Council. On this occasion he delivered a remarkable speech. In the course of it he gave a short history of the indigo trouble in Champaran during the last 50 or 60 years as detailed in the previous chapters;

and he showed the justice of the action of the Government in adopting the recommendations of the Committee. It my be stated here that when the planters raised a clamour against the report of the Committee, the Hon'ble Mr. D.J. Reid, who till then represented the planters on the Legistative Council and who had signed the report as a member of the Committee, resigned his place on the Council and Mr. J.V. Jameson was appointed in this stead. The Government nominated Mr. P. Kennedy, the legal adviser of the planters, as a member of the Council. These two members criticized the introduction of the Bill very severely, but the criticism was more than met by the Hon'ble Mr. Maude in his reply and the Bill was published again in the Government Gazettee on 20th February 1918. The report of the Committee was placed before the Council for consideration on the 4th of March 1918. Many Indian members moved amendments to improve the Bill from the tenants' point of view; while Mr. Jameson and Mr. Kennedy also tried to have it amended from their point of view. But no important amendment was accepted by the Government. There was one matter however worth mentioning. The Bill as originally introduced, contained a provision that if a Government official was informed that a Zamindar realized abwab the former could proceed against the latter *suo moto* and if after the enquiry the fact was proved, he could punish the Zamindar. The Select Committee had deleted this section. The Hon'ble Mr. Tanner moved that it should be reinserted in the Bill. The Government, left its members free to vote as they liked. The result was that most of the non-official members and some official members voted against Mr. Tanner's amendment and it was rejected. Those who voted against it were of opinion that under the Bengal Tenancy Act, a Zamindar who realized abwab, was liable to be punished on the complaint of a tenant and it was not necessary to have a new law for Champaran alone. The Bill was ultimately passed and became the Champaran Agrarian Act. Its principal provisions were as follows :

(1) On and after the commencement of the Act any agreement, lease or other contract between a landlord and a tenant holding under him which contains a condition to set apart the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof for the cultivation of a particular crop shall be void to

the extent of such condition.

Provided that if the tenant has in consideration of such condition received any advance prior to the commencement of this Act, he shall be bound to refund the same.

(2) Where in consideration of the release of a tenant from a condition, the rent payable by such tenant prior to the first day of October 1917, has been enhanced, the amount of such enhancement shall, with effect from the said date be reduced by 20 per cent in the case of rent payable to Turkaulia Limited, and by 26 per cent in all other cases. and a note to that effect will be made in the record of rights.

(3) Where a special condition or incident referred to above has been entered in the record of rights in respect of a tenancy, the same will be cancelled and the rent of the tenancy will be enhanced to an extent proportionate to the reduced enhancement mentioned above.

(4) The Local Government will by rule prescribe the authority for making necessary amendment in the record of rights, whose decision shall be considered final.

(5) Northing in the Act shall prevent a tenant from contracting to deliver to his landlord a specified weight of a particular crop to be grown on the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof.

Provided (i) that any claim for damages for breach of such contract shall be based on a failure to deliver the specified weight and not on a failuie to cultivate any portion of land; (ii) that the term of such contract shall not exceed 3 years.

The most outstanding features of the Act were :

(1) The abolition of *tinkathia*.
(2) Reduction of *sharahbeshi* by 20 per cent in Turkaulia and 20 per cent in other factories.
(3) The freedom of tenants' holdings from an obligation to grow indigo and liberty to them to grow indigo on the voluntary basis if they liked; and
(4) Arrangement to prevent litigation in respect of the matters covered by the Act.

The Committee had also recommended that 25 per cent of the *tawan* realized by the factories should be refunded. The Government had accepted this recommendation. Accordingly the Bettiah Raj refunded Rs. 1,60,301-9-9 out of the *tawan* realized by 18 factories. It may be added here that no refund could be got in respect of villages that did not belong to the Bettiah Raj. In regard to one factory it is worth stating that its proprietor, after realizing the *tawan*, transferred it and it was considered unjust to force a refund from the new purchaser. After the passing of the Agrarian Act, the *Pioneer*, the mouth-piece of Anglo-Indians, severely criticized the action of the Government which had dared to do some justice to the long-suffering tenants of Champaran. It wrote as follows :

> "We regret to find in those steps the worst of the faults that can be attributed to the bureaucracy. Infirmity of purpose is the key-note throughout and it manifests itself in the usual symptoms ; a purposeless insistence for as long as possible on secretariat secrecy and a refusal of requests for discussion when constitutionally put forward followed by a prompt acceptance of the same request when the party making them shows a disposition and abillty to make things unpleasant for the secretariat; professed reliance on the opinion of local officers so long as that profession serves as an excuse for secrecy and delay, followed by abandonment of those opinions when they are found to be inconvenient; a too obvious desire to evade for as long as possible grasping the nettle of a controversial subject with the inevitable risk of injustice resulting according to the power of one side or the other to put pressure on Government." (*Pioneer*, March 13, 1918)

It was natural that the Anglo-Indian Press should write like this. But every fair-minded person will admit that it was the first attempt on the part of the Government to redress the long-standing grievances of the tenants and even to this the hands of the Government were forced by a world-renowned reformer like Mahatma Gandhi. The so-called self-created rights of the planters were no doubt affected and their henchmen in the Anglo-Indian Press undoubtedly felt sore about the matter, but the effect of the Act, so far as the ordinary people were considered, was all for the

good and after a long long waiting the burden on the oppressed tenants was for the first time lightened to a certain extent.

20

HOW VOLUNTEERS SERVED

It was the opinion of Mahatma Gandhi that one of the main reasons of the sufferings of the tenants of Champaran was their ignorance. He was convinced from the very beginning that it was impossible for any outside agency to improve their lot unless their mental and moral condition was improved. This applies to the whole of India, but it can be demonstrated beyond contradiction in Champaran. The tenantry is altogether helpless. It is weak and there is gross ignorance. Mahatmaji had, therefore, made up his mind at an early stage of his mission that even if he succeeded in securing some relief for the ryots they would not be able to get the full benefit of it and they would become subject to fresh bonds. It has already been observed that since the advent of Mahatma Gandhi a peculiar sense of freedom and fearlessness was visible among the tenants of Champaran. But whether this was only a passing phase or a permanent acquisition by them could not be said for certain. Their mode of living also requires a great change. Dirt in the villages, dirt on the roads, dirt everywhere. The villagers have lost the ordinary capacity for organized work and cannot, by their combined action, repair a small village pathway. On the advent of any epidemic disease they fall victims to it, there bring none to help them or protect them and there being no arrangement for their treatment. When there is no arrangement for sanitation what arrangement could one expect regarding medical relief? Mahatmaji had accordingly decided that arrangement for spread of education was as necessary among them as the redress of their grievances. Sometime before the Enquiry Committee commenced its work Mahatmaji had written to some friends about it and told them what sort of volunteers he needed for this social work. He had written to a friend :

> "Their (volunteers') work will be the most important and lasting and, therefore, it will be the final essential stage of the mission. They (volunteers) have to be grown up, reliable, hardworking men who would not mind taking the spade and

repairing and making village roads and cleaning village cess pools and who will, in their dealings with their landlords, guide the ryots aright. Six months of such training cannot fail to do incalculable good to the ryots, the workers and the country at large."

After the Committee had made its report, Mahatmaji found time to attend to this part of the work and on the 8th of November 1917, he came to Champaran from Bombay with some volunteers. It was his wish that in this social work he should get the help of planters and that in the villages of almost every factory he should open one or more schools. But alas ! this wish could not be fulfilled. He decided that if the planters would not give him lands in their villages, he should open these schools in independent places. At a distance of about 20 miles to the east of Motihari there is a place called Barharwa Lakhansen which is a village of the Bettiah Raj and free from the control of any factory. It was decided to open a school there. A generous gentleman of village Babu Shivgulamlal gave his house for the school and promised other help. There on the 13th of November 1917, Mahatma Gandhi opened his first school in Champaran. The school was put in charge of Shriyut Baban Gokhale, his cultured wife Shrimati Awantikabai Gokhale and Mahatmaji's youngest son, Shriyut Devadas Gandhi. Some time later Shriyut Chhotelal and Shriyut Surendraji came from Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, and stayed at Barharwa. Mr. Baban Gokhale is a distinguished engineer of Bombay, who had received his education and training in Europe and Shrimati Awantikabai had travelled in Europe and before coming to Champaran she was engaged in the work of education in Bombay and has been doing the same kind of work after her return from Champaran.

Another school was opened by Mahatmaji on the 20th of November in a village called Bhitharwa. This village is situated in the Nepal Tarai about forty miles north-west of Bettiah. At a short distance from this village is the Belwa factory of which Mr. A.C. Ammon was the Manager. There is a small temple in the village in which a *sadhu* used to live. The temple has some *lakherai* (rent-free land). The *sadhu* gave a portion of that land for the school which was opened in a straw hut erected for the purpose. Shriyut Sadasiva Lakshman Soman, B.A., LL.B., a

vakil of Belgaum in the Bombay Presidency, an enthusiastic young man from Gujarat, Shriyut Balakrishna Yogeshwar Purohit, Shrimati Kasturbai Gandhi and Dr. Dev began to live there.

With the help of Seth Ghanashyamdas, a wealthy merchant, a school was opened on the 17th of January 1918, at Madhuban in the Seth's house. Shriyut Narahari Dwarkadas Parikh, B.A., LL.B., a resident of Gujarat and Professor of the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, his wife Shrimati Manibai Parikh, Mahatmaji's Secretary, Shriyut Mahadev Haribhai Desai, B.A., LL.B., his wife Shrimati Durgabai, Shrimati Anandibai, the sister of Shriyut Divekar, the Registrar of the Women's University of Poona, began to live there. For some time Shriyut Vishnu Seetaram Randive alias Appaji and Professor Kripalani also worked here. Professor Kripalani had to undergo imprisonment in Champaran, which of course he gladly accepted.

It is a matter of regret and shame for the people of Bihar that while highly educated and respectable people of the class mentioned above from other provinces volunteered their services, for some time not one man was found in the whole province to take up this social work. Babu Dharnidhar, M.A., B.L., had the good fortune of accompanying Manatmaji from Muffaffarpur to Motihari when Mahatma Gandhi set his foot for the first time on the soil of Champaran. To him also came the privilege of assisting in the completion of Mahatmaji's work by six months' stay with his wife and children imparting education in the school at Madhuban. Besides the ladies and gentlemen mentioned above, other volunteers joined later on and served in one or another of the schools. They were Shriyut Brajlal Bhimji Rupani of Satyagraha Ashram, Shriyut Pranlal Prabhuram Yogi from Kathiawad. Shriyut Ramaraksha Brahmchari and Babu Shyamdeva Sahai alias Dipaji of Saran and some paid teachers were also engaged from time to time. The objects and ideals and the method of education imparted in these *pathashalas* were described as follows by Mahatmaji in a letter to a Government official :

"In the schools I am opening, children under the age of 12 only are admitted. The idea is to get hold of as many children as possible and to give them an all round education, i.e., a good knowledge of Hindi or Urdu and, through that medium, of arithmetic and rudiments of history and

geography, a knowledge of simple scientific principles and some industrial training. No cut and dried syllabus has yet been prepared because I am going on an unbeaten track. I look upon our present system with horror and distrust. Instead of developing the moral and mental faculties of the little children it dwarfs them. In my experiment whilst I shall draw upon what is good in it, I shall endeavour to avoid the defects of the present system. The chief thing aimed at is contact of children with men and women of culture and unimpeachable moral character. That to me is education. Literacy training is to be used merely as a means to that end. The industrial training is to be designed for the boys and the girls who may come to us for an additional means of livelihood. It is not intended that on completing their education they should leave their hereditary occupation but make use of the knowledge acquired in the school to refine agriculture and agricultural life. Our teachers will also touch the lives of grown up people and, if at all possible, penetrate the *purdah.* Instruction will be given to grown up people in hygiene and about the advantages of joint action, for the promotion of communal welfare, such as, the making of village roads proper, the sinking of wells, etc. And as no school will be manned by teachers who are not men or women of good training, we propose to give free medical aid so far as is possible."

In accordance with these principles education was given to about 140 children at the Barharwa *pathashala* under Mr. Gokhale and Mrs. Gokhale began to educate about 40 girls and women. In this *pathashala* weaving also was taught and people there trained in the art of corporate action by making them keep their wells and village roads clean. Mr. Gokhale and Mrs. Awantikabai would, themselves, clean the village which naturally produced a great impression on the minds of the inhabitants. Women used to be trained now to keep their children clean and well. This *pathashala* still exists. The Bhitharwa *pathashala* is situate in a locality where complete ignorance reigns. The climate is bad. The number of children for these reasons never exceeded 40; but Dr. Dev created very good impression among the people by teaching others sanitary modes of living. Shortly after the establishment

of the school, one night at about midnight the school huts caught fire and were reduced to ashes. Dr. Dev, Shriyut Somanji, Shriyut Appaji and Shrimati Gandhi were staying there at the time. The school was at a distance from the village and so the village people could render no assistance. It was the considered opinion of Dr. Dev that the fire was due to an act of incendiarism. But instead of wasting time in inquiring into the cause of the fire, Dr. Dev. Mr. Somanji and Appaji decided to erect a brick building in place of the burnt straw hut ; and in no time did they succeed in erecting it, carrying bricks on their own heads and doing the work of coolies. This building still exists.

After the departure of the first batch two volunteers from Maharashtra, named Narayan Tammaji Katagade alias Pundalik and Eknath Vasudeva Kshire came to Champaran and began to work at the Bhitharwa *pathashala* with singular boldness. Pundalikji's presence proved too much for the Government and after a short time he was ordered under the Defence of India Act to go out of the Province. After Pundalikji's departure his place was taken by another Maharashtra volunteer, Shriyut Shankarrao Dev, B A., who remained there for several months.

The Madhuban *pathashala* was also very successful and had about 100 boys. A girl's *pathashala* was opened there in which some 40 girls received education under Shrimati Anandibai. After the departure of the first batch from Madhuban, Shriyut Kshire and Shriyut Shyamdev Narayan worked there for several months. The entire cost of the *pathashala* was practically borne by Seth Ghanashyamdas. It is to be regretted, however, that this *pathashala* is closed.

As stated above education was given in these *pathashalas* in Hindi and Urdu. Mahatmaji himself used to visit them from time to time and suggest improvements in them. Dr. Dev used to supervise the *pathashalas*, deliver lectures on sanitation and cleanliness and treat sick people. Although the volunteers of the first batch remained in Champaran for six months only their influence was not confined to the *pathashalas* only, but as was expected by Mahatmaji all the people of the locality were touched and even *purdah* ladies did not remain altogether unaffected. If this work had been continued for some time, then not only Champaran but the other districts of Bihar would have undergone a great change for the better.

From what has been said above it should not be presumed that Mahatma Gandhi commenced his work of education only after the report of the Enquiry Committee. For those who were capable of taking lessons he had started his work of education the day he set his foot in Champaran. He showed a new world to those who had the privilege of serving under him. He gave them a new life. Whenever we used to talk to him about Swaraj he used to say that he was doing the work of Swaraj. We could not. I confess, realize at the time the immediate work in hand in Champaran has been finished, it may truly be said that it was the real work of Swaraj. When Mahatmaji, on his way to Champaran, had visited a village near Muzaffarpur and seen the condition of the people and the children there, he had exclaimed "We can get Swaraj only when we improve the lot of these people !" He had proceeded to Champaran to improve the lot of those people. It was his opinion that his great work required a large number of volunteers and it was desirable to get as many men and women as possible; but every one was not fit for this work. For this kind of service they alone were fit who had accepted Truth, cast out fear and adopted poverty. Mahatmaji accordingly attracted his assistants towards these noble ideals. When we first reached Champaran many of us had servants, we had a cook also. Within a short time the number of servants was reduced and shortly afterwards there was one servant left. The result was that those who had not in all their lives drawn one pot ful of water out of a well or washed a small napkin began under the Mahatma's influence within a short time to help each other in bathing, washing clothes and cleaning utensils. In fact we used to do everything ourselves. To sweep the rooms and floor, to clean the kitchen, to wash our own utensils, to carry luggage and other bundles from the station and the market—these and such other things we all used to do and without hesitation. After the removal of the cook Shrimati Gandhi used to cook food for all of us and used to feed us all with motherly affection. It was one of the results of Mahatmaji's visit that we ceased to look upon travelling in a third class compartment as a matter of indignity. His simple nature, Swadeshi dress and great sacrifice wrought a tremendous change in the lives not only of those who had the privilege of working under him, but also many other persons in the province. After his return from South Africa this was the first

great work in India to which he had set his hand and through God's grace by achieving success, he was able to show his countrymen a new path which would enable them to attain whatever goal they may have before them.

So ended the great struggle in Champaran. It is difficult to fully and correctly estimate the effect of Mahatma Gandhi's stay in Champaran. The time has not yet come to write the history of his achievements. The seed which he sowed in Champaran, nay in India, has sprouted, but is yet a sapling; it will take time to blossom into flower and bear fruit. But if from the greenness of the sapling any estimate can be formed of the sweetness of the fruit to be, then it will have to be said, in all gratefulness, that in no distant future new life, new thoughts, new aspirations and a new age are going to dawn. The seed of Indian Swaraj has been truly sown in Champaran and the freedom which the poor, helpless downtrodden tenants of Champaran have secured against the educated, ever vigilent and wealthy planters, living under the protecting wings of the powerful Government, is but a precursor of that larger freedom which Indians, trampled under the heels for centuries, are going to achieve in their struggle for Swaraj. May God hasten that day !

3

OUR PATRIOTIC PRINCES*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It was only two days ago that we celebrated the anniversary of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. I, the first servant of the State and President in the words of the Constitution, am visiting for the first time, the part of India which used to be ruled by Indian Princes under the protection of the British Empire. Since the advent of freedom, conditions have changed all over India including the part where Indian Princes were ruling. The British Government decided to hand over sovereign powers to the representatives of the Indian people and to withdraw their troops which were the symbol of that Empire in India. This resolution was duly carried into effect. Naturally, the Indian Princes and Rulers could not but take similar steps in their own territories. This was inevitable because there was considerable political awakening among the people who were demanding the transfer of power. Moreover, the Princes were inspired with national self-respect and patriotism. It was because of these facts, I believe, that the peaceful change was so quickly carried through in the administrative system of the princely States. The credit for inducing the Indian Rulers to agree to this change goes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and to the policy of non-violence which Gandhiji had made popular in this country. We have before us

* Translation of speech delivered in Hindi at the unvelling ceremony of the statute of Maharaja Chhatrasal at Panna on January 28, 1951.

a practical demonstration of how this policy should make it possible that the people as also the Princes who from an individual point of view were losers—alike remained happy and contented.

I am sure the Princes are as sorry and grief-stricken at the death of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the common people. This is true in spite of the fact that by his tact, talents and charm, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had caused some "loss" to the Princes by including them to transfer their powers to the people. Now, power is in the hands of the people and the responsibility of government is on the shoulders of popular representatives. The Rulers and the subjects have to march forward shoulder to shoulder in the task of creating a new India. Poverty and misery must be banished and we have to make our land a peaceful, prosperous and powerful nation whose glory and greatness would in no way be less than that of any other country of the world. The history of our land has been a glorious one and all of us can derive inspiration from many great events in our long and chequered history.

We have been able to complete the integration and complete unification of our country. Even a glance on the map of India would show to us the significance of this event. In spite of two wings of our country having been cut off, we find that India under one Government today—in point of area, population and resources—is much greater than it ever has been in the past. This important and essential objective, we have been able to realise by our own co-operative effort. Now, it rests on us to complete the work of making this country prosperous and happy—a work which requires the services and the support of all Indians.

We have gathered here to commemorate one of the heroes of India's glorious history. I am deeply grateful to all of you for asking me to unveil at this auspicious celebration, the statue of Maharaja Chhatrasal the famous and brave hero of Bundelkhand. I always feel great happiness in paying my respectful homage to brave men,—whatever country or creed they may belong to—who by following the path of justice and righteousness have succeeded in freeing their country and making it prosperous.

This is the first time that I am visiting this part of India. Revered Thakkar Bapa had toured this region a year and a half ago. I read what he had written about it in the press. He had found this part of Bundelkhand to be very backward and poverty-

stricken. It is our misfortune that he has departed leaving innumerable poor people grief-stricken and sad. I have heard quite a lot about the beautiful natural scenery of this region as also of the splendid temples of the Chandel period at Khajuraho. Such talented poets as Keshavadas, Lall and Padmakar also belong to this region. Maharaja Madhukarshah, Rao Champatirai and Maharani Lakshmi Bai were the other bright jewels of this region. Just like Rajasthan, the Vindhya region is also famous as a land of heroes. But it is a matter of regret that historians have paid either very little or no attention to this region. Rajputana has been fortunate in having such great historians as Col. Tod, and Sri Gauri Shankar Ojha. It is true that the history of India requires to be written afresh. Some work in that direction is being satisfactorily carried on at present. In my opinion, the preparation of authentic history based on adequate research should be taken in hand at as early a date as possible.

How amazing it is that there is not even a mention of such a great hero as Maharaja Chhatrasal, in the current history text-books of our country. His memory has been kept green by "Chhatraprakash" of the poet Lall and "Chhatrasal Dasak" of the poet Bhushan. "Chhatraprakash" had been almost entirely lost, though its English translation by Capt. Pogson was published by Major Price of the Fort William College in 1820 at Calcutta. Later, this historic epic was published by the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha. A book about Maharaja Chhatrasal has also been published in Marathi. Its Hindi translation, I read some years ago. Someone has also written a book on Chhatrasal in Bengali. I have heard that another book named "Bundelkhand Kesari" had been published by someone. A few stories and miscellaneous articles have appeared in periodical journals. Recently, I saw a small booklet named "Maharaja Chhatrasal".

So far as I know, this is about all the literature that is available on Chhatrasal. Even from this limited literature, we can get a fairly good idea of the love of freedom, justice and God that the great patriot of the 17th century had. Throughout his long life of 80 years, he continued to wage an incessant struggle for the freedom of his country. He founded a fairly extensive kingdom and gave it is very good administration. All this was due to his courage and bravery, but the qualities that

have made him a memorable and a great figure of the age were other than these. He had not the least trace of pride in him. He went in Shivaji who was then at Singhagarh and got himself initiated into the cause of freedom in all humility. Nor did he have the least hesitation in asking for military support from Peshwa Baji Rao. There was not the least trace in his liberal mind of such narrow racial feelings as create a distinction between a Rajput and a Maratha. Another of his great qualities was that he always fought against injustice and oppression and not against any religion or creed. According to "Chhatraprakash", besides Rajputs there were Kayasthas, Bhats, Ahirs, Dhimars and Baris in the army of Chhatrasal. His army included persons of the sweeper caste as also a Muslim Sardar named Fauji Main, Like Shivaji, the treated Muslim women like his own daughters. He never acted techerously towards his enemies nor did he ever raise his arms against unarmed people. In war and in administration he was always on the side of justice. I may add that he had inherited all these qualities from his great father Champatirai. Gratitude also was one of the great qualities of Chhatrasal. Even when he had become a great ruler he did not forget Mahabali, his servant, who used to take him out for horse-riding during his childhood. It has become a saying which is prevalent, I understand even today, in this region that "Chhatrasal Mahabali alway did the right". The title of good brother had been given by him to the hourse which had protected him at a time of great danger. He is also well-known for honouring persons of merit. How could the poet Bhushan not consider the honour paid to him in the Court of Chhatrapati Sahu much too insignificant in comparisoner when Chhatrasal put his own should to the pole of the palanquin in which Bhushan was being carried? Impressed by this unrivalled honour shown to him the poet sang :

"Now shall I not think of any other sovereign
Sing I shall only of Sahu and Chhatrasal."

Maharaja Chhatrasal was himself a good poer. Recently, I had occasion to read the collected works of Chhatrasal and I may add that some of the verses, whether devotional or political, are of a very high order. It is really surprising how, in that life of unceasing struggle, could he get time to compose such sweet verses. But in view of the tradition of the great heroes of India,

it is nothing impossible. In our country, we find the simplicity of heart and depth of devotion combined with the spirit of bravery. There was no place for political intrigue in his brave heart and it was precisely for this reason that it remained ever flowing with the milk of kindness instead of being a dry and arid desert. From the political works of Chhatrasal it is clear that he was a man of great piety and a remarkable devotee of Lord Krishna, He had the fortune of having the society of Swami Prananath as also of Mahatma Akshar Ananya. I think that it was because of the influence of these great people that he never came to have any pride about his great military feats. His conviction in his own words was, "Fame comes to the man—to God who giveth his devotion." He never considered himself anything more than the humble servant of the Lord. When he was offered a royal 'Mansab', he flatly declined to accept it and said, "What glory is there in accepting the largess of man. The Mansabdar of the Lord of Brija I am." A brave man, ever ready to throw away his life for the good of others, can seek no other protection and patronage except that of the Lord. The Father of the Nation, the unrivalled Satyagrahi, Mahatma Gandhi, had also no other anchorage except on God. "He destroys the pride of the proud. The pride destroyer ever fulfils his truth." Chhatrasal, instead of considering himself the master, used the treat himself as the servant of the people. It is on record that, among his political advisers, there used to be represented all the heads of each caste and community. It was for this reason that he had become so popular.

I am going to unveil the beautiful statue which the Chhatrasal Memorial Committee, the decendants of Maharaja Chhatrasal and the people of this region, have caused to be made by a talented sculptor. But I would ask you to remember that our duties to our great ancestors do not end merely with the installation of their statues. This is only a very ordinary means of paying our homage to the brave. That is why we did not encourage the installing of the statues of Mahatma Gandhi in this country. In my opinion, the best way of showing our respect for great men is to follow in their footseps. We should imbibe in our lives the great qualities which had made them great. These qualities are their spirit of sacrifice, their love of truth and morality, their patriotism and service of the people and above all their love of

God. I pray to God to give us all, the capacity to imbibe the great qualities of its great heroes so that we may tread the path of love and truth and may become capable and sincere servants of our secular State.

4

SUCCESS AND FAILURE—A RETROSPECT*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Just one year has elapsed since India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic and the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly came into force. It is worthwhile taking stock of what has been achieved and wherein we have failed.

The early part of the year was disfigured by communal tension and ugly incidents occurred in East Bengal leading to a large exodus of Hindus from East to West Bengal. These were followed by similar incidents and exodus of Muslims froms West to East Bengal. A pact was arrived at between our Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Pakistan as a result of which the situation has gradually improved and a large number of the emigrants have gone back to their original homes. It is to be hoped that confidence will be created so that a repetition of such incidents may become impossible. Minorities must be assured of a safe and honourable existence, and given opportunities to grow and develop and become contended and loyal citizens of the State to which they belong.

Side by side with the communal pact, there was also a trade pact with Pakistan which partially enabled trade between India and Pakistan to flow freely. It is to be regretted that on account of the failure to reach an agreement on the question of exchange-ratio, trade relations are not yet established on a footing of profit to both parties and each has had to look to distant countries for

*Broadcast to the Nation on January 26, 1951.

the supply of some of its requirements and the disposal of its surplus goods.

Disputes with Pakistan continue on some matters which are vital. The Security Council of the United Nations had appointed Sir Owen Dixon as Mediator for bringing about a settlement of the Kashmir qeustion. He spent some months in this country, but unfortunately his efforts failed. Recent talks in London have led to no better results. We have always been prepared to let the people of Kashmir decide freely what they want, but we cannot be expected and are not prepared to abdicate our legal rights or shirk our moral duty to the people of Kashmir pending that decision.

The question of evacuee property is of vital importance to us, but we have not been able as yet to secure a settlement with the result that our work of rehabilitating millions of people has become impossible of satisfactory accomplishment.

Apart from our disputes with Pakistan, our relations with other Asian countries have been most friendly and cordial—so also with countries further abroad. We hold and believe that armed conflict and war solve no existing problems but create new ones and with the progress in the invention of destructive weapons now achieved, a war spells ruin and devastation on an unprecedented scale and threatens the extinction of modern civilisation. With that conviction, our Prime Minister has used all the prestige of his great personality and the goodwill of this country to limit the scope and extent of conflict. The deep wounds of the last World War have not yet been healed even in countries which are supposed to have won it—not to speak of those that lost it. We can only hope and pray that humanity will be spared another disaster. The greater and stronger a country, the heavier is its responsibility to do all it can to avoid and avert disaster.

Although we are a republic, we have decided to remain in the Commonwealth. We have maintained the friendliest relations with Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth, based on a recognition of one another's complete independence and a mutual understanding of one another's interests. Our regret is that no progress has been possible in securing for people of Indian origin, born and settled in South Africa, a position as citizens of that country consistent with self-respect and the

requirements of civilised life.

Coming nearer home, we can take credit for having done whatever was possible with our resources in rehabilitating those who had been forced to leave their hearths and homes and properties and estates and to emigrate to India from Pakistan. There were at the end of November 1950 more than 3 lakhs of persons on dole in relief camps. More than 8 lakhs of displaced families from Pakistan have been allotted land for cultivation. Roofed accommodation in urban areas has been secured for more than 21 lakhs of displaced persons either in evacuee houses or in barracks, government quarters, etc., or in newly-built houses. Small loans have given to more than 140,000 people, the total amount being more than Rs. 9 crore. Big loans have been given to displaced industrialists and businessmen numbering 5,000, the total amount being nearly Rs. 5 crore. Employment has been secured by the Employment Exchanges for more than 1½ lakhs of persons. Altogether, Government expenditure on displaced persons during the financial years 1947-48 to 1950-51 is estimated at Rs. 98.50 crore. The displaced persons have suffered great privations with patience and dignity, and have been trying to restart life and stand on their own legs as best they can. With all our efforts, however, the work of rehabilitation is yet far from being complete and, considering its tremendousness which was added to considerably in West Bengal in the early part of the year, it could not be expected to be completed. All that I can say is that the Union and State Governments are keen and anxious to do whatever is possible and with the experience that has been gained, the work is being tackled with greater effectiveness and speed.

The financial and economic position of the country has been constantly engaging the attention of our ministers. It is to be regretted that on account of financial stringency, we are not able to undertake constructive work on as large a scale as we would wish to. Some large projects which are expected to yield great benefits by controlling floods and providing irrigation and electric energy on a large scale—leading to industrial development—have registered satisfactory progress. Our only regret is that we are able to undertake more such works and to spend as much over those already in hand as we would like to. In other directions

also, greater progress would have been achieved if more finance were available and the money market had not been as tight as it has been. Production has not kept pace with requirement. This has been so, especially in the matter of food, largely on account of causes beyond our control. We have had a series of natural calamities which have damaged our crops on an extensive scale. We have difficult and anxious times ahead and need all the foresight, resourcefulness and sacrifice our people are capable of, to tide over them. We are trying to have larger imports than we have ever done hitherto, but it is not so much these imports and their proper and equitable distribution—essential as these are—that will really solve the problem. It is the resourcefulness and determination of the people that will enable us to see things through. The years open with a large balance of trade against us, but when once we decided to put it right and set to work, we have succeeded in wiping it out. So, God willing, shall we do with the food problem.

Our Constitution has come into force, but we are still passing through a period of transition and are being government by certain transitory provisions laid down by it. This will coutinue till the general elections are held under the Constitution. Preparations are being made for them, but the work is so vast, involving more than 170 million voters and more than 3,500 seats to be filled up, that it has not been possible to complete them. It is hoped that we shall be able to hold the elections in November-December next.

The work of consolidation of the former Indian States and assimilating them in what used to be Indian Provinces, has gone on successfully. Under the Constitution, they have as honoured a place and as useful part to play as any other unit of the country. The burden of this work as also of maintaining law and order in the country was borne by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel whose passing away at this critical time in our history has dealt a stunning blow to us and created a void which cannot be filled up. His farsightedness, matchless powers of persuasion and organisation, a realistic appreciation of the situation and firmness and determination have brought under one federal constitution and one central administration a much larger part of the country than ever in its long and chequered history.

Our work as a free nation has just begun. We are confronted

with difficulties within and the horizon is overcast with dark clouds without. We have to gird up our loins and face them. God helps those who help themselves. So let us deserve God's help.

5

THE CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The third anniversary of our national emancipation comes to us not only as a day of rejoicing but also one of challenge. We may legitimately rejoice over the progress that has been made during the last three years in the political integration of the country, the nationalisation of its army, the reorganisation of its administration and the establishment of a planning machinery. While we have cause to be satisfied with our progress in forgoing powerful instruments with which to transform our economic life, our actual record in overcoming economic difficulties and making good the shortages in commodities cannot afford us much satisfaction. Our progress in the economic sphere has been rather slow and small.

We have, no doubt, overcome the bottleneck in transport and the flow of goods has become freer. We have made progress in the rehabilitation of refugees but much still remains to be done. Recent events in Bengal have added to the magnitude and complexity of this problem. We have brought more land under the plough, though, even in this sphere, progress has not been such as to free us from anxiety. The food problem continues to be one of our major headaches. During the last few weeks, the food situation in some parts of the country has been serious. Steps have, however, been taken to bring immediate relief. We have undertaken multipurpose projects, which when completed, will place

*Message to the nation on the third anniversary of Independence broadcast from the Delhi Station of All-India Radio on August 15, 1950.

more power at our disposal and free us from the curse of floods. Here also, however, progrss is rather slow and tardy. But we must realize that progress in this sphere could not but be slow as the situation with which we are faced is being shaped not only by ourselves but also by factors and forces—both elemental and international—over which we do not and cannot have any control.

Our present difficulties are great and pressing, but they need not depress us. On the other had, we should recognise them to be what they really are—a challenge. We must recognise, once and for all, that we can meet this challenge only if he firmly follow the path of right. The fact is that man can escape his misery only if he remains loyal to moral values even in adversity—a truth that can be illustrated from a thousand stories from the scriptures and from history. This is also the essence of the techings of the Father of our Nation. More than ever before, we should hold firmly to the moral code which he had placed before us—the ideal of the world above self, service above gratification, love above violence and creation above destruction. Adherence to this faith implies, in the present historic epoch, that each one of us should be ready and willing to perform his duty even at the cost of his rights. So long as the problem confronting us was one of aquiring power from the British, we could not but carry on our struggle in the name of our rights, both national and individual. Now, we do not have to acquire rights to make the best use of the power we already possess in order to serve the interests of our country as a whole. Naturally, the emphasis shifts from acquisition to contribution, from individual rights to group obligations. This shifts of emphasis becomes all the more urgent in view of the complex problems that have arisen during the centuries. We have practically nothing to share except this burden of history. Our people can successfully bear it only when each one of us, whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, city dweller or villager, aged or young, man or woman, becomes ready and willing to share it. This means that, at the present moment, no individual may legitimately insist on his own privileges and profits, comforts and conveniences, claims and rights. On the other hand, each citizen should apply all his energies and devote all his resources to meeting the challenge of the past and the promise of the future. We should be ready to work day and night for carrying light and life to every

one of the cottages in the myriad villages and towns of our Motherland. It is only when such dedication to duty will be the distinguishing feature of our individual and collective life that we shall triumph over the difficulties that beset us.

Once we grasp this central truth of service before pleasure, of putting others before self, all the problems that have been poisoning the atmosphere will simply fade away. Communalism, regionalism, class rivalry, corruption—whether political, administrative or in the sphere of business—are all symptoms of a lack of faith in this great and basic principle of group action. What we need most is a closer understanding of the problem, a deeper insight and self-examination. We must not only, as individuals and as a nation, adopt high ideals but also establish among ourselves a form of conduct which is based on an appreciation of moral values. The only way out for us is to rededicate ourselves—each one of us—to this moral faith.

We must resist the temptations of which power is likely to expose us. We should not think of becoming rich at the expense of others and of our principles. The false notion that the time of work and sacrifice is ever and it is now time to enjoy should be dispelled. This is all the more important in the context of the international situation. The world is today on the brink of an abyss and a single false step may send it headlong into the bottomless pit of destruction. I, therefore, hope that our common people, our workers and administrators, our thinkers and writers will all rise to the occasion and, discarding all selfish considerations, throw themselves into the noble task of building a new and better India. Capital, trade, labour, the services and professions, all have their contribution to make and their burdens to bear and let me hope that they will fulfil their obligations. We are heirs to a great past and the architects of a better and braver future. By the grace of God and through the active co-operation of all sections of our people, we shall overcome the difficulties that straddle our path and march forward to the glorious temple of Peace, Prosperity and Progress.

6

THE FARMER'S PROBLEMS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I have been associated with agriculture in many ways. An agriculturist in a small way myself, my interest has grown with years. At the present moment, our country stands in need of agricultural development more than anything else. Being an agricultural country, it is really a matter of shame that we should have to depend upon other countries for our food. It is a challenge not only to the agriculturists of the country, but also to the scientists who are engaged in agricultural research. We should be able to produce what is required for our own food requirements. It is not in foodgrains only that we are deficient. There is scarcity also of fruits, vegetables, milk and milk-products. It is, therefore, necessary that the Agricultural Research Institute should devote itself to research work of a kind which may actually and immediately benefit agriculture. As far as I am able to judge, the kind of research which should be conducted by this Institute and by others under the auspices of the Research Association, is not research of a fundamental character such as we have in laboratories dealing with physics or other sciences. Here, we are essentially concerned with research of a type which can be made immediately available to the people and applicable to the solution of problems which arise in our daily life. It is from that point of view that I look up to the Institute to help the Government and the people in solving the food problem. Of course, fundamental research has its value

*Address to the Governing Body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research on February 5, 1951.

and undoubtedly research work in this institute will benefit from the latest results of such fundamental research. But, so far as practical problems of everyday agriculture are concerned, we have a right to look to this Institute and to other institutes similarly engaged, for assistance.

There are various problems which confront us, but in solving all these problems, no one who is associated with agriculture in India can ignore one fact. It is, that ours is a country of agriculturists who have small holdings. One must remember that while the number of agriculturists runs into hundreds of millions, their holdings are of such small size that the results of research meant for large-scale farming cannot be of much assistance to ordinary agriculturists. In the first place, the resources of the ordinary agriculturist are very limited and he cannot afford to apply the results of research. In the second place, he cannot, even if he could afford to purchase those things, easily get everything that may be suggested. So, in dealing with these problems, all research workers have also to bear in mind the fact that we have to deal with a large number of people who do not have much education but who are not, for that reason, any less intelligent. Whether it is research in agricultural engineering or in soil-chemistry or in improvement of plant-breeds or in the prevention and destruction of pests, you have to bear in mind these fundamental limitations.

We hear a great deal about the improvement of agricultural machinery. Undoubtedly, the instruments that are used by our agriculturists are mostly of a primitive type. One of the reasons may be that they have not been able to find anything better. You can be helpful to them only if the improvement is such as can be easily effected by the ordinary farmer. That is to say, if you were to devise a new plough, it must not be a very costly one. Then, it must be light enough to be operated by ordinary bullocks available in the country-side. It must again be suitable for the particular soil where it is used. Therefore, if useful results are to be achieved, our agricultural research has to be conducted not in one place where you have got only one kind of soil, but in many places where you have got different kinds of soil. As you know, the cattle that we have in this country differ in quality from province to province, very largely on account of climatic conditions. A plough which can be easily drawn, say by a pair of bullocks in Hissar cannot be drawn by a pair of bullocks of the Tarai districts of my province

– Bihar. We have, similarly, different kinds of ploughs. If you give the plough, which is used in Champaran in Bihar to agriculturists in the Punjab, probably much of the bullock-power would be wasted. I am mentioning these little things from the experiences of small agriculturists because I consider that these factors play an important part in research work.

Coming to Soil Chemistry, we have such a variety of soils in this country that you can grow almost anything in some areas and nothing in others. It is, therefore, no use telling agriculturists that they should grow only a certain crop. It must be a crop which is suitable for the particular kind of land. The quality of land also depends very largely on the availability of water for irrigation. Agricultural Engineering and Soil-chemistry are so closely connected that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. A central institute, like the one that we have in Delhi, has in the first instance to co-ordinate all kinds of research work which is being conducted in different parts of the country and on different lines. More than that, it has to set the standard for the various institutes spread all over the country.

There is another aspect of the question which is really no part of research. I wish to draw your attention to the problem of carrying the results of research to the agriculturist who is not an educated person. If, somehow or the other, it can be shown to him that an improved method or seed or an improved instrument will, ultimately, be profitable, he will not be slow to accept that improvement. My own experience is that the agriculturist is a shrewed person. He may not be literate, but he has intelligence enough and he has the background of experience which enables him to judge for himself. He is not averse to change, but is averse to experimentation at his own expense. If somebody else does the experimentation and proves to his satisfastion that the result is going to be profitable, my own idea is that he will quickly adopt changes that may be suggested. I have found that they have readily accepted new varieties of sugarcane where they have found them to be more profitable. They have also quickly taken to a new strain of wheat where it is of better quality, giving a better yield and bringing in more money. They have also adopted, though to a much smaller extent, better strains of paddy.

I know that a great deal of research-work is being done in this Institute and in others, but I am not sure if the results have

been propagated to the same extent among agriculturists. Even where it has been done. I am not aware if farmers have accepted and adopted the results. A different kind of approach is, therefore, necessary and that approach can be through some sort of organisation in close contact with the agriculturist. There may be agricultural associations for particular purposes or particular individual workers who may, by their example, actually show to the agriculturists that now methods are really profitable. I believe the Government can do much by having small farms in special areas and for specific purposes. For instance, in an area where the main crop is sugarcane, a sugarcane-farm is required. I think—without wishing to be unjust to anyone—that demonstration farms are not as useful or helpful as they should be because they are run on lines which are not quite appreciated by the ordinary agriculturists. The officers concerned are, sometimes, not easily accessible, or the methods that they adopt for propagating the results of research are such that they do not always appeal to the agriculturists. Whatever the reason may be, it has to be investigated why these demonstration-farms have not served as model farms from which all the agriculturists could learn and start working on the same lines.

At the present moment, food is the biggest problem before us. It is up to the scientists, the Agriculture Ministry and the farmers to see that our dependence upon foreign imports is removed as soon as possible. There is a great future for this Institute and for agricultural research. Not only will they be doing a great service to the country but they will also advance their own cause if they devote themselves wholeheartedly to research work of a kind which will be immediately helpful to agriculturists. I I desire to convey my congratulations in advance to all those who have been trained and are going to be awarded certificates for proficiency in research work. I hope, when they go back to their respective places after their training in the Institute, they will devote themselves in their work with enthusiasm.

7

THE ROLE OF HISTORY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

We are meeting under the shadow of a great national calamity. One of the architects of our modern history, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, has been taken away from us and a void has been created in our political life, which will remain unfilled. He has left for us practical lessons of sacrifice and an example of indomitable will, unfailing devotion to duty and great powers of organisation and administration.

It gives me great pleasure to accept the invitation so kindly extended to me on behalf of the All-India History Congress. I have no pretensions to scholarship, but I have a genuine interest in history, particularly in the history of my own country which, with all the ups and downs it has seen during the past centuries, can furnish material for constructing what may be called a philosophy of history. It is a fitting thing that you have met in part of the country which is, geographically speaking, in the centre of India and has played an important part in its history. Not far from where we are meeting today, is situated that world famous village, Sevagram, which was the hub round which the wheel of our freedom movement revolved during the last twelve or thirteen years of its momentous career, which ended with the attainment of complete independence. It will not be out of place, therefore, if in inaugurating this session, I take the liberty of emphasising,

* Inaugural speech at the Nagpur Session of the All-India History Congress held on December 27, 1950.

what may appear to many to be, the most obvious thing. India needs a true and exhaustive history of its distant and glorious past, no less than of its unique and unprecedented struggle which has succeeded in placing it, once again, on the map of the world.

It is often said that our ancestors and forebears have not left us any authentic history of our country or material from which such history can be reconstructed. We are getting an unending stream of material from archaeological excavations and discoveries, in the form of inscriptions, coins, sculptures, figurines, pottery, beads, etc., found in India, Central Asia, Indonesia, Central America and the Northern part of South America. Apart from such material evidence, there is a vast amount of literature which can throw a flood of light on our past. Not only works of art, but also works on medicine, mathematics, grammer, law, music, and the science can yield, if properly studied, matter of great value regarding our life and culture. Of historical documents, there is a considerable number and more are being discovered from time to time. History books often contain references to a number of works from which the author drew his material, most of which are no longer available. Coming to more recent times, we may mention the Burajis of Assam, the Kulapanjikas of Bengal, the Vansavalis of Mithila, the Khyats of Rajasthan and the Dafters of Maharashtra and a host of other literary works. The memoirs of the Muslim kings and their countries, the histories of their wars and conquests, the descriptions and accounts of their administration as also the accounts the travels in this country left by foreign travellers, are a storehouse of information. There is a plethora of material in many European languages, particularly in English, of the period when we had trade and political relations with Europe for the first time. Modern Indian languages, no less than Sanskrit—both Pali and Prakrit—can give us information and throw a flood of light on many an unexplained incident of our history. You are all familiar with these and have, in fact, utilised them to good purpose.

The need has been felt for presenting to our country, not only a connected and correct account of events as they have happened, of the wars and conquests of kings and emperors, their heroic deeds and miserable misrule and the political upheavals; but also how our life has been lived and shaped, how great religious, cultural and literary movements have arisen and influenced hundreds of millions of people and how art and science, industry

and commerce have developed and fructified. Efforts are being made to meet this urge. Some years ago the Bharatiya Itihas Parishad planned to bring out a history of India in twenty volumes, which, for various reasons, it was unable to complete. Your Congress has also undertaken a similar task and it is a matter for congratulation that the two schemes have been amalgamated. It is to be hoped that within a reasonable period, we shall have a complete history written by competent authors who will utilise the available material and give us a reliable account of our achievements and failures. If history teaches by example, it will also provide guidance for the future.

This naturally brings me to the question of what a good history should be. History has been looked upon in different ways by different people at different times. The most common view of history is that it is a record of the past and that its main concern is to disinter facts and figures from the graveyard of time. This is obviously a most inadequate appreciation of history. If it is the study of philosophy, i.e., teaching by precedent, a mere record of the past would not be able to do that for the simple reason that the man of the present would find his problems more complex than of those of the past. Such a concept of history, therefore, seems to me to derogate from its value to man. This fact was recognised as early as the period of Polybius, the great Greek historian who, writing in the 2nd century B.C., observed, "If you take from history all explanations of cause, principle and motive, and of the adaptation of the means to the end, what is left is a mere panorama without being instructive, and though it may please for the moment, it has no abiding value". History as a mere chronicle of events is not adequate. It would be even less adequate if it is only an account of kings and nobles—their follies and foibles, their wars and their conquests—taking no account of the common man and of the great religious, linguistic, cultural and artistic movements, which have convulsed humanity from time to time. I will quote Polybius once again. Writing about the Punic war, he said, "I record these things in the hope of benefiting my readers. There are two roads to reformation : one through misfortunes of one's own, the other through those of others; the former is the most unmistakable, the latter the less harmful . . . It is this which forces us to consider that the knowledge gained from such a study of true history is the best of

all education for practical life. For, it is history and history alone which without involving us in actual danger would mature our judgment and prepare us to take right views, whatever may be the crises or the fortune of affairs". The Roman view of history was not any different from that of the Greeks. Cicero has well stated the pinciple of historiography in the following words: "The first law in writing history" says he, "is that the historian must not dare to say anything that is false, and the next that he must dare to tell the truth. Also, that there must be no suspicion of partiality and animosity. The superstructure depends on facts and style". The great Roman historian Livy believed that the great events in human life are determined by fate. Referring to the rise of Rome, he said, "In my opinion the origin of so great a city and the establishment of an empire, next in power to that of the gods, was due to fate". He included "the supernatural as an intrinsic part of the human story, specially in the handling of crises when by miracle or portent the gods reveal themselves . . . and when gods are not on the scene, they are just behind it". The subjects to which Livy drew the attention of his readers were the life and morals of the community, the men and the qualities by which through domestic policy and foreign war, dominion was won and extended. Speaking of the past he says "You see in the clear light of historical truth examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and for your country what to imitate and what . . . to avoid". History has thus been looked upon, not only as a mere lifeless chronicle but as giving us an insight into the genesis and the development of human societies and their institutions.

As against the concept of fate, we have the concept of environmental and hereditary determinism. All these lay exclusive emphasis on one aspect or another of human life and experience and put all that has happened as proceeding from that particular aspect. It can hardly be denied that man is very largely influenced by his environment, by the operation, action and interaction of material objects with which the comes into contact, and also by the biological laws according to which his own organism is the result partly, if not exclusively, of the simple organisms of his ancestors. But this concept of determinism whether it is by fate, environment or by heredity, reduces all human phenomena to a position in which they are supposed to be the result of the

operation of only one or some of those foces and denies any kind of influence of the human personality itself. This is running in the face of facts. True history must be found in a re-conciliation and synthesis of these and various other forces and factors which operate on and through human beings. Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* has mentioned, as sources of history, *Purana* (myths and legends), *Itivritta* (events), *Akhyayika* (tales), *Udaharan* (biographical quotations), *Dharmashastra* (cultural life), and *Arthashastra* (material life). These, according to him, constitute history. He has thus introduced the cultural and material factors as essential constituents of the historical concept. This view is not only comprehensive, but extremely original in that it defines a concept of history which is ultra-modern and is comparable with the latest views and theories of history propounded by western scholars. His singular merit is that he thought of a synthesis of what later came to be two rival philosophies of history, namely, the idealist and metaphysical, which have been at conflict to establish their exclusive claims during a century or more. In writing history, particularly of our country, we must recognise that the influence of material factors on man's destiny which was ignored earlier is, at least, as important a factors as human personality and its superphysical motives. A synthesis of both factors is necessary for the progress of history and a correct interpretation of its laws.

Indian historians of the present generation have not only the responsibility, but also the opportunity of interpreting history correctly. Many of them have seen great events with their own eyes, the like of which perhaps, were never before seen by any other historian. During my short sojourn in Europe between the two World Wars, I was struck by one thing which has remained fresh in my memory. Wherever I went I saw memorials of warriors, conquerors, and wars. It is strange that there are no such memorials in his country, at any rate, in any appreciable numbers, except those relating to the period of our history connected with Europe. Our great architectural monuments of the Hindu and Buddhist periods are mostly religious in character and execution. Similarly, the great architectural monuments of the Muslim period are also either religious or semi-religious except for a number of forts, here and there, which are indicative of the accidents of a period of conflict and turmoil, but there is no

apotheosization of warriors as we see in Europe. Our history naturally, therefore, has to take note of the significant fact that it is not a matter of surprise that this country should have seen, within the last thirty years or so, the emergence of a new technique of struggle for freedom, the emergence of the programme of non-violence and its actual implementation. I am not aware if any historian of note has, in his own writings, given to this new technique its due importance. My feeling is that this history is yet to be written. Strange as it may seem, the material which can enable the historian to reconstruct what I consider the most glorious chapter not only of our history but of the history of the world, has not been collected and preserved as it ought to be. It is, instead, gradually but, nonetheless, surely being destroyed. Those who have been engaged in this struggle have neither had the training nor the time and opportunity to keep a record of the day-to-day happenings much less of the inner thoughts and motives which influenced them. Whatever is available is spread over such a vast area and in so many diverse forms and languages that it would require people specially trained to sift the grain from the chaff.

The other day, I paid a visit to Simla where I saw admirable work being done under the guidance of your secretary, Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad, on the preparation of a history of the part played by India in the last great war. Not only are many able people engaged in studying and sifting the material which has been made available, but the writing of the history, in an interesting and instructive form, has made considerable progress. The Government is spending a considerable amount on this enterprise. We know that modern warfare does not leave anything to chance and while some are engaged in the actual fighting, other keep accurate records, not only in words but also in pictures, of what is happening. There is not much danger of this material being irretrievably lost. It is not true only of the present, but for a fairly long time, great importance has been given to the history of wars, by Governments and specially by the military authorities, to enable soldiers to learn the strategy of warfare and there is no doubt that these histories have proved to be of great value to them. Cannot a history, written with understanding and sympathy, of the events as they occurred from day to day in our non-violent struggle, be

of equal value to us as well as to others in the future ? It was an experiment, as Mahatma Gandhi would have called it, but it proved to be successful. Who knows that the world will not some day accept the principles and adopt the strategy which Mahatma Gandhi taught and applied and with the help of which, we won our freedom ? To one who believes in the efficacy of that principle and who has faith in its strength and universality, this history is of tremendous value, not only for this country, but for the whole world. May I ask this Congress of historians to consider this work of equal, if not greater importance, than the history of the distant past or even of the recent World War ? Those who participated in the struggle have done their work. Many of them who could have given valuable information from their personal knowledge, but have not recorded it, are one after another passing away. Within a short time, the historian who has nearly witnessed the events and more so the historians who will come later, will have to depend more and more on accounts which were actually published from time to time in various forms like newspapers, brochures, reports and so forth. The living material is fast disappearing and if any one is interested in it, he has to be vigilant and to take up the work without delay so that future generations may not say that great deeds were done but not recorded by historians and that their lessons were lost. I hope no one here will retort that it is not only for the historians but also for the Government which comprises men who have taken part in the struggle and have thus been instrumental in making history, to provide the information and means to have it recorded. I can only say that even if the Government, with its other preoccupations, is unable to do so and fails in its duty, it is no justification for others to do the same. I believe, however, that something is being attempted under Government auspices and can only express the hope that it will be done in a way worthy of the great events since non-violence has victories more glorious than war.



NEW RESPONSIBILITIES*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Yours is an ancient and historic town that has witnessed many a battle through the centuries. The responsibility of guarding the country against foreign invasion has continued to rest with your people. The country is faced with the question of the assistance it can give you in utilising your defensive potentialities and power to their highest. I hope that you will continue to shoulder the responsibility for the country's defence as you have in the past.

You have referred to your present difficulties and I agree that though, in the *Puranas* and in the ancient scriptures, we have descriptions of rivers flowing through this region, it is a sad truth that, today, you are suffering from a scarcity of water. I am happy to know that you are making arrangements to get over this difficulty. I hope the new dam that is being constructed, not far from here, would benefit your district also, and that you would be able to obtain adequate electric power to enable you to procure the water you need by sinking wells. In view of the great advance made by science in recent times, I can say with confidence that there is no region which cannot be rendered fertile if man resolved to make it so. Therefore, water shortage can also be overcome provided the requisite intelligence, skill and equipment are available to him. Now that we are free, I am sure we would be

*Reply to the address of welcome presented by the Ambala Cantonment Municipal Board on January 6, 1951.

able to solve this and similar other difficulties. It is, of course, true that we are faced, at the present moment, with a large number of problems simultaneously and that it is not easy to tackle them all successfully; sometimes our problems confuse us and at times people even begin to doubt our competence. But I would like to assure you that there is no cause, whatever, for despair or dejection. It is only three years since we won our freedom but these three years brought terrible calamities to our land, the brunt of which was borne by you. I am grateful to Divine Mercy by the grace of which we had the strength to overcome our troubles and survive disasters, so that, having regained our lost balance, we can, once again, march steadily forward. I would, therefore, urge you to maintain your courage and confidence to solve any difficulty which may yet come and to put before the world, that which we wished to accomplish; also, to make real our dream of India becoming a happy and prosperous country. We have to continue working for the ideal which Gandhiji had placed before us. We should not lose heart if we have not made any appreciable progress, but if we persevere, with hope and courage, we are sure to succeed.

I recognise the part which the Government can play in the realisation of this dream, but the power of the Government is nothing but the strength of the people it represents. If we, the people, lack vigour and initiative, the Government, particularly an elected Government, can never have these qualities. If the people are weak and incompetent, their Government would be weak and incompetent too. A Government is, only the reflection of its people. I am confident, therefore, that a concerted effort on the part of our people would eliminate whatever difficulty we might be faced with.

There are different views held by the people today. Some believe in speed while there are others who favour a slow but steady pace, but I would urge that you tackle with courage the task ahead of you. There is no lack of work in India because when a free nation faces difficult problems, it needs willing and efficient workers. Even though India has a population of nearly 36 crores, we feel the shortage of people who would devote their entire energy and time to serve the country selflessly, and until such people come forward in large numbers, the country cannot forge ahead.

We should not feel that, with the advent of freedom, our responsibilities are over and that we can sit back and rest on our oars. On the contrary, freedom has brought with it fresh responsibilities, and I am convinced that we need much greater sacrifice and effort today for the reconstruction of our country than we did to win our freedom. India does not belong to any one particular person, community, race, or political party; it belongs to us all and demands in return some contribution or the other from each one of us. The measure of what is gained from the country is the measure of what we give to it, and without our own contribution, out demands on our country will yield us nothing. Once we have done our bit we should entrust the fruits of our endeavour to God. The Will of God moves through the work of man; we are but instruments of His Will, and should continue to perform the task allotted to us.

I hope that you will maintain the progress which you have made in the provision of education and the prevention of disease. Both are essential and the local self-governing bodies should help in them so that the people working in these local institutions gain experience and be trained to serve in higher capacities. In their early life, many great Englishmen served in Boroughs or similar local bodies and thereby gained valuable experience to perform great things later in their life. Today, all committees that exist in India, whether village panchayats, municipalities or local boards, provide similar opportunity of training to their members. These institutions were established by the English with this very objective. They thought that, as in England, people by serving on local bodies would gather that necessary experience which would stand them in good stead when they tackle more important questions. You have this opportunity before you, and the limitations which formerly circumscribed these bodies have now been removed giving you complete control of your work. I am confident that through a proper use of the facilities you have today, you would be able to work for the greater good of the country.

9

THE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

You, the graduates of this University, are about to enter the wider spheres of life. I would like to congratulate you on the success that you have achieved so far in the acquisition of learning. At the same time, I entertain the hope that you would use your learning for the creation of a new India where every individual shall be prosperous and completely free from all sufferings and sorrows.

This land has produced brave sons and daughters. Today, however, we are in the grip of despair and misery. Only three years ago, troubles and tribulations suddenly descended on the people of this State. Hundreds of thousands had to abandon their ancestral homes and property to save their liberty and life. Thousands of them, who could not succeed even in escaping with their lives, were killed with the greater cruelty and brutality, Even today, there are thousands of persons whose tears have not dried up and whose sorrows have not left them.

Besides these, great calamities and catastrophies are threatening to overwhelm the world and India. The production of food, clothing and housing is not keeping pace with the continuous addition of numerous hungry months and naked bodies. Naturally, therefore, we have to suffer troubles and difficulties also in the economic sphere. All of you must realise that it is

*Address delivered at the Third Convocation of the Panjab University on January 6, 1951.

your duty to free yourselves and your countrymen from these troubles. Any feeling of helplessness in the matter is, in my opinion, an insult to your youth and education. I know that many people are in the grip of despair. All of them feel that it is the duty of the Government to save them from all the troubles. If the Government fails to do away with these troubles, they begin to feel that it is due to its negligence, if not due to the dishonesty and corruption of its leaders and officers. All of us must realise that the Government is nothing distinct from the people of the country and has no inherent powers of its own. On the contrary, it is only another name for collective co-operation of the citizens among themselves. It derives all its power, drive and direction from its citizens. It, therefore, reflects in its composition and character the attitude of its citizens. Therefore, it is meaningless and idle to expect that the Government can bring about a miracle even though the people remain passive and inert. The fact is that our people often forget, like Hanuman, their own potential power. It was the realisation of this truth that led Gandhiji to advocate non-co-operation with the British Government in order to overthrow the British Empire in this country. I think, it is time that the people had a clear conviction and realisation that unless they are themselves active and resolved to master all their troubles and difficulties, the Government would not be able to take speedy and effective steps in this direction. I feel that the youth of the country, particularly those who have received or are receiving their education in the universities, can play a very active part in bringing about the cultural and economic progress of India.

Education is not merely a personal acquisition, but a trust which your ancestors and contemporaries have placed in your hands. It is not necessary to give elaborate arguments to prove this point. Knowledge is not something which any single individual can build up by his own unaided efforts. Our present store of knowledge is the result of the experience pooled by past generations over a period of thousands of years. The coming generations will learn by your experience and thought in the same way as you have done. Educational institutions and universities which have the custody of this precious heritage have to depend upon the support of the people. They are being maintained and run by the people's money. No doubt, students also have to pay some fees, but institutions and universities cannot be maintained

or run with these fees alone. I, therefore, consider that for your education, you owe a debt to your countrymen. You can repay this debt by serving the country selflessly.

I do not think that our resources and strength are in any way deficient. If we pooled our resources and energies, we would have at our disposal such an immense power as would enable us to surmount all our difficulties. Unfortunately, the spirit of collective and co-operative endeavour is lacking and almost every one of us is busy pursuing his own ends. It is true that collective endeavour and collective team-work can be compulsorily organised by the State, but coercion or compulsion in this sphere can never pay. It would be far better to establish a system of co-operative effort—a system in which every individual takes part voluntarily and with the faith that therein lies his own and his country's good. True revolution consists in creating among the people a consciousness of the great benefits of collective endeavour as also of their own inherent strength. It is only by carrying through such a revolution that we can make every one of us prosperous and happy.

The foundations of the society which Mahatma Gandhi wanted to establish were truth and non-violence. It could be organised only through collective co-operation. Gandhiji's aim was that every individual should be completely free and that there should be no obstacle in the development of his natural capacities. At the same time, this opinion was that the individual should do nothing which may cause injury or harm to others. Every individual shold devote his life to the service of his fellows. This self-imposed discipline should be so strong that he may not go astray even in the hour of his greatest weakness. Even today there are persons who can make any sacrifice for serving their fellows. People who throw themselves into the thick of battle, for the sake of their country, have this very attitude towards life. The need is to infuse in society, this spirit of service which is at present found in a few individuals only.

It is a well-established truth that the spirit of sacrifice is infectious. Collective sacrifice is not so difficult as is individual sacrifice. A soldier is inspired with daring and courage by witnessing people facing death bravely all around. It is necessary to awaken in the people of our country the spirit of sacrifice. It was by infusing this spirit that Mahatma Gandhi had made

people undergo any amount of sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

A revolutionary change is required in the social organisation. In the new society, every one would be completely free and nobody would oppress or exploit another. The pangs of hunger, want of clothes and of shelter would be a thing of the past. It would be a society where every one would work with all his heart. The Government servants in our ideal society would work in a spirit of service. There would be no international conflicts or internal discord among the people. In short, all the activities would be directed towards the good and the well-being of all men.

It may no doubt appear that the picture I have drawn is more or less Utopian in character. No one can, however, deny that there are thousands of examples in the world which go to prove that man can rise far above his individual or momentary self-interest and can embrace martyrdom for the benefit of his fellows in society. Those who are filled with this spirit of service should make all possible efforts to kindle it in the hearts of others. It was with this idea that Gandhiji had started *ashrams* at different places in the country where people used to live a free life dirceted by their own will. We may follow the way of living in these *ashrams* or draw up a routine in conformity with our own views. Whatever routine we may adopt, I am sure, it would have at its bottom this spirit of service, sacrifice and self-restraint. This spirit is to be found in the hearts of only a few of the products of universities. It cannot be considered to have been the fruit of that educational system. It is due, in reality, to the natural gifts of such individuals which have blossomed in site of the obstacles and difficulties caused by that system of education. The enrichment of the mind, the development of the body and the earning of money involve quite a long preparation and training. Similarly, the spirit of service and sacrifice also needs effort to be developed. But no one pays attention to this need. Only Mahatma Gandhi had placed before in a constructive programme for awakening this spirit of service in our society. I would like that, in our educational institutions, the courses of study should be calculated to develop this tendency and inclination among their alumni. This cannot be done merely by learning and committing some lessons to memory. It requies

opportunities for intimate contact with life. The scheme of basic education was conceived with a view to facilitating the organisation and establishment of a new society. It is essential that the Government of the country and the institutions connected with education as also the educated class should realise its significance and make it the foundation of their system.

I am really sorry to find that this work is not receiving the attection it deserves. Many people had worked with Gandhiji and the whole country is now deriving benefit from the movement he had started. But, I do not think it will be improper for me to say that we have neither fully understood his principles and programme of action, nor have we made a real effort to put them into practice. The fact is that the new generation is not even being made familiar with his principles. I would certainly like to know what arrangements have been made to impart knowledge of these principles in our educational institutions. I know that Mahatmaji did not write any text-books which could be prescribed in educational institutions. At the same time, I hold that he wrote so extensively and on so many subjects that if selections were made from his writings, numerous text-books could be made out of them. He had contributed so many articles and had made speeches that if all of them were collected they would cover thousands of pages. Some work has been done in this direction and some books have already been published on different subjects. I, therefore, do not believe that text-books inspired by the Gandhian ideals are difficult to write. Such books can be written for every class of people. The Department of Education alone can do this work. Moreover if books of this type were prescribed in educational institutions, even private people would eagerly take it up.

At the present moment, there is no arrangement in any university of India for the teaching of Gandhian philosophy and ideals. I admit that it will not be sufficient to fill the minds of students with Gandhian principles. The inculcation of the spirit of service is a matter of actual practice in life. If it is difficult to introduce practical training, the educational institutions can at least make some arrangement for intellectual training in Gandhism. Is it not an irony of history that there should be arrangements for the teaching of the philosophy of Kant and Hegel of Marxian socialism as also of the philosophical writings

of modern western thinkers in our educational institutions, while the revolutionary principles of Gandhiji should be totally neglected ? It only shows that we are blindly following the old trail and though we have achieved political freedom yet we have failed to free ourselves from mental slavery. Our educational system continues to move in the same old grooves. I feel that a revolutionary change is essential in our educational system. Basic education should be the foundation of our entire educational system. So long as this educational revolution is not carried through, the social revolution for which Gandhiji strived would not be brought about. In the scheme of basic education, intellectual development and practical training march together, keeping in step with one another. It is my genuine desire that all of you should be faithful children of Mother India and thus, make your life fruitful and successful.

10

ONWARDS WE MARCH*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Four years ago, Freedom had laid on us her glorious mission—the mission of banishing from our land, all vestiges of povery and ignorance, social inequality and tensions, injustice and exploitation. Even in normal circumstances it would have been a difficult and daring task, but it was much more so due to the conditions existing at that time in the world and in our country. The last global war had dealt such a heavy blow to the industry and agriculture of the old world that the cessation of hostilities found it incapable of even feeding and clothing its teeming billions. Everywhere in the Eurasian continent there was economic scarcity and political instability. Even the resources of the new world—of the Western Hemisphere with the great U.S.A.,—were not sufficient, just after the war, to fill the industrial and agricultural void caused in the economy of the old world by that gigantic conflict; we also did not and could no remain unaffcted by this post-war misery. While that by itself would have been quite great, it became still greater due to the violent aftermath of the partition of this country. Even though the product of an agreement, engendered such violent passions that millions upon millions of men and women were forcibly uprooted from their ancestral homes. This forced migration of hordes of men caused not only indescribable misery to countless innocent human beings, but also put almost an unbearable strain on the finances of the

* Independence Day Broadcast on August 14, 1951.

Government and the emotions of our people. Besides, it led to the sundering of the economic bonds and the unsetting of the economic balance between agriculture and industry in this ancient land. This violent and sudden economic dislocation deepened still more the crisis of commodities through which we of this land along with other nations and peoples of the Eurasian continent had been passing. But, even though the path was dark and difficult, we undertook this journey towards our goal with faith and determination.

Ever since that day, we have been incessantly striving to overcome all the difficulties astride our path. But, the conspiracy of Nature with History has been creating fresh difficulties for us at every step. History, as I have already said, had made our task quite heart-breaking. Nature also struck us many an unkind blow soon after. Draughts, floods, earthquake—all afflicted us in turns. Even the economy of a country, industrially and financially far better equipped than ours would have suffered terribly under these blows. But to us, who had commenced our journey only with a meagre equipment, they have proved much more difficult to face and overcome. Is there, then, any reason to feel surprised or shocked if the progress we have made during the last four years has been slow and tardy ? Again, is there any reason to feel shocked if we have been plagued by all sorts of shortages and scarcity ? Need any one complain if in this stormy weather the ship is not sailing as smoothly as many of us would like it to do ?

The darkness has not yet been dispelled and the clouds have not yet rolled away. Even now there are threatening and heavy clouds on the borders of our country. I know not what they portend, but it is my fervent hope that they will melt away without bursting into a devastating downpour. We are doing all in our power to see that they do melt away and we hope we shall succeed. But, if a downpour does come, I am confident we shall be able to meet it with courage and calmness, firmness and determination.

The economic front too does not present a bright picture. Our people have to put up with great economic difficulties. Prices continue to be abnormally high and shortages in food and other necessities of life continue to worry us. We are determined to face and overcome these difficulties. Some progress has been made in the multi-purpose projects we have taken in hand to

harness Nature in our country. If nothing untoward happens and these great plans are completed, we would have become free from the endemic evils of floods and draughts. These projects would bring water to parched lands and power to industries, light to the dark cottages and prosperity to the people of our country and the natural handicaps from which our agriculture suffers would have been removed. Nor have we been sitting idle in the matter of removing other clogs in our agriculture, the mainstay of our economy. In almost the whole country, a powerful attempt is being made to put agrarian relations on a new footing by abolishing intermediaries between the State and the actual tiller of the soil. The State is also interesting itself in some of the basic industries leaving aside a large sector for development by private enterprise.

Indeed, our industrial production has begun making recovery. There is every hope that the sugar and cloth production is going to increase greatly and soon these basic commodities would become available in larger and larger quantities. In the sphere of trade and finance also, there has been great improvement. The foreign trade balance is now in our favour.

On the political front, we had inherited grave and complex problems. Soon after our freedom, it appeared as if law and order was in serious danger due to the communal frenzy released in this sub-continent by the Partition. But thanks to our historic traditions of tolerance and law and above all to the energetic co-operation of you all, the crisis was surmounted. Today, complete peace and order regins throughout the vast length and breadth of this country and every community is able freely to profess its religion and pursue its vocations. We have, also, in great measure filled the gap in our administrative services which had been caused by the sudden withdrawal of many officers after the Partition. Similarly, we have had appreciable success in the rehabilitation of displaced persons from across our borders and it can be hoped that the problem, as it is today, would soon be solved, if fresh complications do not arise and the responsibility of rehabilitating another large band of displaced persons is not thrown on our shoulders.

Another outstanding achievement has been the completion of the process of the peaceful integration and standardisation of the political forms and functions of all our constituent units,

Throughout the length and breadth of the country, democracy will now reign supreme. In vast regions, in which, till a few years ago, the people had not the least voice in the affairs of the government, the people are now, despite many practical drawbacks and deficiencies, constitutionally the sovereign masters. What is more important, democracy has now come to stay for good in these regions also. Notwithstanding all superficial differences, the integrated States are now becoming stable and strong units and it can be confidently hoped that very soon they would march shoulder to shoulder with the other constituent States of our Republic.

Much more important than the integration and the standardisation of the constituent States of the Republic is the great democratic election which is going to be held within a few months from now. It would be unparalleled in the history of the world. I am sure that it would awaken the sleeping giant of this country to the consciousness of its great power and potentiality. Need I express the hope that the adage 'vox populi vox dei' would be remembered by you all when you cast your votes and declare your choice. You have the power of goods and let me hope you would use it like gods.

We have made our choice—and it is in conformity with the historic ideals of our country and the techings of our Master. We stand for the dignity of the human spirit, for the reign of justice and reason and for the establishment and maintenance of peace among nations and classes. We believe that through the pursuit of these values alone can we build the temple of prosperity and culture in our country. I would, therefore, like to assure all peoples that we desire nothing more than to be left in peace to devote ourselves to the fulfilment of this historic task. We ardently desire and hope that other nations would also devote their energies and resources to the creative purposes of human life and would co-operate with one another in the building up of a humanity which would really be, in letter and spirit, the crown of creation. On this day, I would like to send my fraternal greetings to all the people and the nations of the world and would assure them that the people of India would co-operate fully in the maintenance of peace, promotion of justice and the growth of prosperity in the world.

To you I give today a message of hope and cheer. Although darkness may be all around you today, but forget not that the

night is always followed by dawn. With faith in God and confidence in your strength, you have to march with steady steps and clear vision—and you shall succeed. This is the call of your destiny and, heirs of great past as you are, you shall accept it and make your future still more glorious and great.

11

REPUBLIC DAY BROADCAST*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Today we are completing four years of the life of our Republic. On the eve of its anniversary. I send my greetings and best wishes to all my countrymen. During the last four years we have been celebrating this occasion appropriately by holding public meetings and dedicating ourselves to the service of the nation. I feel that this is also a fitting occasion for looking back and recapitulating past events with a view to assessing our efforts and seeing how far we have moved towards our cherished goal of making the common people inhabiting this country happier. The object is not to criticise any one but merely to know where exactly we stand today; because this knowledge is bound to be of help to us in the direction of our future efforts.

Let us take first of all the food situation. It is indeed gratifying that during the year which has gone by, we have made distincting improvement in the production of food. Our efforts, spread over the past several years, for growing more food and for bringing more and more land under the plough have at long last started bearing fruit. The production of nearly every foodstuff has gone up, as a resulting which Government were able to effect a substantial reduction in the imports of foodgrains from overseas. Decontrol of coarse foodgrains recently ordered by Government is a proof of the present easses situation and of the increase in production. It is probable that as a result of decontrol of coarse

*25 January, 1954.

foodgrains, their prices may fluctuate for some time, but I am sure before long they will have found their own level and the commodity marked will stabilize.

Our first Five-Year Plan for the all-round development and progress of the country is proceeding apace. Under this Plan, work on the river valley projects and other schemes of vast magnitude in progress. One of these projects, known as Kakrapar Dam Project in Gujarat, was completed a few months ago. It is hoped the more than six lakh acres of land will be irrigated with the water made available by the construction of this dam. Sufficient progress has been made in respect of the Tungabhadra Project as well as the dam for storing the water of the river is already completed. Similarly, the Mayurakshi Project for Bengal, the Damodar Valley Project for Bihar and Bengal, the Bhakra-Nangal Project for the Punjab, PEPSU, etc. and the Hirakud Project for Orissa—all of these may be said to be in an advanced stage of execution. In fact, the Mayurakshi Project has already started giving its benefits to the region concerned. Another two or three similar projects which were not included originally in the Five-Year Plan are also under Government's active consideration. Principal among them is the Kosi River Project.

During the year under review, we have had to face calamitous floods and their after-effects. Widespread damage was caused by floods in Assam, Andhra and particularly in Bihar. Besides providing the maximum possible relief to the affected areas, Government are anxious to find a permanent solution of this recurring problem, It is only by constructing dams and controlling the water of these rivers which are flooded every year and by adopting measures for improving drainage that this problem can be solved. Plans are being formulated for this purpose. When they are taken in hand and implemented, it is hoped that not only would floods be averted but the stored waters would also be utilized for the purpose of irrigation.

Whatever little we have been able to achieve so far through the Five-Year Plan gives us great hope for the future. When the Plan is fully implemented, there will be an all-round increase in production. In addition to the great increase in acreage under irrigation a good deal of power will also be available which will not only break the monotony of our villagers, but also increase the potentialities for large as also small industries. While

Government are making an all-out effort to implement this Plan at the cost of hundreds of crores of rupees, it is the bounden duty of every Indian, high or low, to extend his or her full co-operation in the accomplishment of this great task.

It will not be out of place to mention here the Community Project Scheme on which work is going on in the countryside. This scheme was started in October 1952, in 55 selected rural centres. Luckily, I had the opportunity of visiting a few of these centres last March and April. I was very happy to observe in these centres that the project had stirred the imagination of the village folk and roused their enthusiasm. They have been able to do a good deal of solid work. Under the Community Project Scheme people have voluntarily constructed link roads, dug wells for the procurement of drinking water, cleaned tanks and village ponds, improved the production of fish, increased the production of foodgrains by sowing seeds of improved quality and by using manure, opened schools for children's education and started hospitals for the sick. These small projects have come quite handy to the villagers who have evinced keen interest in them, particularly because they are able to see the outcome of their efforts so quickly. As a results of this scheme, the whole atmosphere in our villages has become surcharged with constructive activity. To extend the scope of this useful work, Government have decided to start the Community Project Scheme in another 55 centres.

The Government of India have also set up a Board for encouraging cottage industries, specially the Khadi industry. People interested in cottage industries and having sufficient experience and knowledge of their working have been appointed to this Board. Government have also agreed to subsidise these industries. It is hoped that as a result of this step, cottage industries will receive a great impetus.

I would like to mention here the "Bhoomidan" Movement started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Although the Government have no direct connection with this movement, yet its great potentialities in solving the problem of equitable distribution of land and effecting a revolutionary change in the attitude of the people towards it cannot but interest every one. For remedying the present maldistribution of land among cultivators, it is altogether a novel move, a move which is perfectly in keeping

with the traditions of this country and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

While reviewing the events of the past year, we cannot forget the creation of a separate Andhra State. The people of Andhra had been agitating for it for many years past. Now that this demand has been met, let me hope our Andhra brothers will seize the opportunity to make a united effort for ameliorating the condition of the people of their newly-created State. The demand for redistribution and reorganisation of States has been insistent for some time. The Government have announced the appointment of a high powered Commission to go into this question. Let me hope that as a result of the efforts of this Commission a satisfactory solution will have been found of all the controversial issues, consistent with the unity, solidarity and safety of India.

The Government set up another Commission last year for inquiring into and suggesting ways and means of improving the conditions of what are called backward people, so as to bring them into line with other people and for preparing a comprehensive list of such people. It is in the interest of all of us that every national of this country should have equal opportunity to develop and progress. This is enjoined not only by our Constitution but also by our age-long tradition. Our plans for reconstruction should, therefore, be so broad-based as to benefit each and every citizen of this Republic.

I am glad that displaced persons in our country have now started getting compensation in lieu of property left by them in Pakistan. It is a huge undertaking. Nevertheless, Government have agreed to provide compensation to the best of its resources.

As before, this year also our country had a prominent role to play in international affairs. Our efforts to end the war in Korea have been in keeping with the Indian policy of helping attainment of peace and we are naturally happy that our efforts in that direction have been appreciated by many a foreign nation. When the hostilities in Korea came to an end as a result of the cease-fire agreement, we are asked to be a member of the Neutral Nations Commission to help in the solution of the question of prisoners of war, and to take charge of prisonerss, pending repatriation. However, arduous or thankless the task was, we undertook to do it and have tried to discharge this duly to the best of our ability. We took upon it is a unique opportunity for our armed forces to

have been given such an assignment in a foreign land in the interest of peace an international goodwill. The election of Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit as President of the General Assembly of the U.N.O. is also a matter of legitimate pride for India and the women of the world, since she is the first woman to be called upon to hold that high office.

Notwithstanding all this, we cannot afford to be complacent or rest on our oars. There is so much which still remains to be done for the well-being of our people. We are pledged to establish a Welfare State in India. It is the duty of such a government to raise the standard of living of the people in its charge and to meet their basic needs. To achieve this is not easy, and necessarily takes time. Now-a-days we hear about the problem of unemployment, specially among the educated classes in towns. The Government are fully conscious of it and are adopting measures to tackle it. Our country is so big that no Government with the best of intensions can grapple with this problem successfully unless the people also lend their willing support and co-operation to its policies.

If India gets a good name at home or in the comity of nations, it will ultimately redound to the credit of our people. It is the people who are the backbone of a nation. A nation acquires the capacity to tide over difficulties from the character and high-mindedness of its people. You, the people of India, are truly the builders of the new India that is to be. Its future will depend on your determination, sacrifice and devotion. I fervently hope that you will ever strive to make India a happy and prosperous country.

12

ADDRESS TO FIRST ELECTED PARLIAMENT*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I welcome you here today as Members of the first Parliament of the Republic of India elected under our Constitution. We have now given full effect to the provisions of the Constitution relating to the composition of the Legislatures and the Headship of the State, and thus completed one stage of our journey. Even as we complete that stage, we start on another. There is no resting place for a nation or a people on their onward march. You, Members of Parliament, newly elected by over 170 millions of our people, are the pilgrims who have to march forward in their company. On you rest a unique previlege and a heavy responsibility.

As I speak to you on this historic occasion, I have a feeling of the high destiny of our ancient land and the vast numbers of men and women who live in it. Destiny beckons to us and it is for us too respond to its call. That call is for the service of this great land of India, which has passed through good fortune and ill-fortune alike since its story began many thousands of years ago, at the down of history. During these many years, greatness has come to our land and tragedy has also been our fate. Now that we stand on the threshold of another phase of India's long story, we have to determine afresh how best to serve her. You and we have taken the oath of service to this country of ours. May we be

*16 May, 1952.

true to that pledge and dedicate our highest endeavour to it fulfilment.

India has, after a long period of subjection, gained her freedom and independence. That freedom has to be maintained, defended and enlarged at all cost, for it is on the basis of that freedom alone not any structure of progress can be built. But freedom by itself cannot enough—it must also bring a measure of happiness to our people and and a lessening of the burdens they suffer under. It has, therefore, become of vital importance for us to labour for the rapid economic advancement of our people and to endeavour to realise the noble ideals of equality and social and economic justice which have been laid down in our Constitution.

India has represented throughout her history certain other urges of the human spirit. That has, perhaps, been the distinguishing mark of India, and even in recent years we saw a noble example of that ancient spirit and urge of India in the form of Mahatma Gandhi, who let us to freedom. To him, political freedom was a vital step, but only a step to the larger freedom of the human spirit. He taught us the way of peace and non-violence, but not the peace of the grave or the non-violence of the timid. And he taught us in line with the teachings of India's ancient sages and great men that it is not through hatred and violence that great ends are achieved, that right ends must be pursued and achieved only through right methods. That is a basic lesson not only for us in India, but, if I may venture to say so, for people throughout the world.

I earnestly trust that, in the great tasks that face us, you will remember this ancient and ever-new message of India and will work in a spirit of co-operative endeavour, placing the cause of the nation and of humanity above all lesser objectives. We have to build up the unity of India, the unity of a free people working for the realisation of the high destiny that awaits them. We have, therefore, to put an end to all tendencies that weaken that unity and raise barriers between us, the barriers of communalism, provincialism and casteism. Opinions will and must differ in regard to any political and economic matters, but if the good of India and her people is our dominant urge and we realise, as we must, that this good can only be achieved through the methods of peaceful co-operation and democratic processes, then these differences can only add to the richness of our public life.

It is with this outlook that I beg of you to face your problems here in this country and to face the world with friendly eyes and without fear. Fear today, fear of some approaching disaster, darkens the world. It is not through fear that the individual or the nation grows, but through fearlessness, *abhaya*, as our ancient books tell us.

We have consistently pursued a policy of friendship with all the countries of the world and that policy, though sometimes misunderstood, has been progressively appreciated by others and it yielding fruit. I trust that we shall firmly continue that policy and thus by to lessen somewhat the tension that exists in many parts of the world. My Govenment has not sought to interfere with other countries just as it does not invite any interference from others in our own country. We have tried the method of co-operation wherever possible and our good offices are always available to further the cause of peace. We have no desire to thrust them on anyone. We realise, however, that in the world today no country can remain isolated, that it is inevitable that international co-operation should grow till, at some distant date, all the nations of the world join together in a great co-operative endeavour for the advancement of humanity.

For nearly a year now, efforts have been made in Korea to find some way to a truce which might lead to a peaceful settlement of the many problems that afflict the far-east corner of Asia. I have expressed the hope on several occasions that success will crown these efforts and peace be established again. It is the greatest of tragedies that, despite assertions of goodwill for the Korean people, this ancient country has been reduced by war, hunger and pestilence to utter ruin. It has become a signal and a warning to the world of what war means, whatever immediate justification might be advanced for it. War does not solve problems, it creates them. In Korea now it appears that most of the obstacles to a truce have been overcome and only one major hurdle, the exchange of prisoners, remains. It should not be beyond the wit of statesmen to overcome this last obstacle. Not to do so will be to confess the failure not only of wisdom but of common humanity. The world hungers for peace and the statesmen who bring peace will remove a heavy and fearful burden that now oppresses the minds of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world.

I have referred on previous occasions to the great nationalist upsurge in various parts of Asia and Africa which are still denied freedom. In particular, I have made reference to recent events in Tunisia and expressed our sympathy for the people of that land in their desire for freedom. I regret greatly that, in spite of the desire of a large number of countries in Asia and Africa, even a discussion of this subject was not allowed in the United Nations. The United Nations Organisation was meant to represent the world community, inclusive of all, and its primary aim was the preservation of peace. Gradually, the noble aims of the founders of the United Nations and the Charter that they framed appears to be getting blurred. The wide vision gives place to a more limited outlook. The conception of university changes into something far narrower and the urge to peace weakens. The United Nations Organisation came into existence to fulfil a deeply felt want of humanity. If it fails to fulfil that want and becomes an ineffective organ for the maintenance of peace and advancement of freedom, that, indeed, will be tragedy. I earnestly trust that this geat organisation, on which the hopes of the world have been built up, will return to its old moorings and become, as it was meant to be, pillar of peace and freedom.

My Government has sent a Cultural Delegation to our great neighbour, China. That Delegation has carried the greetings and goodwill of our people to the people of China. I should like to express my gratitude for the cordial welcome that it has received from the Government and people of China.

I regret greatly that the racial policy of the Government of the Union of South Africa has continued and has led to serious developments. Our people have been intimately concerned over this policy because there are many people of Indian origin who live in South Africa. But this question is no longer merely one of Indians in South Africa; it has already assumed a greater and wider significance. It is a question of racial domination and racial intolerance. It is a question of the future of Africans even more than that of Indians in South Africa. Delay in settling this and like questions is fraught with peril for humanity. I am glad that there has been a growth of friendly relation all over Africa between the Africans and the Indians resident there. It is our desire not to interfere in any way with the growth of the peoples of Africa, but to help them to the best of ability.

attention to these matters. It has to balance immediate with future advantages. At the same time, it is anxious that no distress should be caused and it will do all in its power to prevent this from happening.

The Planning Commission is now finalising its report on the Five-Year Plan. A very vital addition to this Plan has been made by the proposal to start fifty-five Community Projects throughout the country. This has been possible because of aid from the United States of America through their Technical Co-operation Plan. The Community Projects are not only intended to increase our food production but, what is even more important, to raise the whole level of community living. It is hoped that this programme will grow and cover a considerable part of India. But it can only grow if it has the full co-operation of the people and I earnestly trust that in this matter, as in implementing the other proposals of the Planning Commission, their co-operation will be forthcoming in full measure.

The integrated programme for agricultural production has made satisfactory progress. Jute production has increased considerably from 16.6 lakh bales in 1947-48 to 46.8 lakh bales in 1951-52. Cotton production has gone up during the some period 24 lakh bales to over 33 lakh bales. Production of foodgrains has increased by 14 lakh tons, though this has been offset by drought in certain areas. Sugar production increased from 10.75 lakh tons in 1947-48 to 13.5 lakh tons in 1951-52. There has also been an increase in the production of steel, coal, cement and salt. India is how self-sufficient in salt and is able to export her surplus. A Central Salt Research Station is being established in Saurashtra.

The general economic situation in the country has been kept under continuous observation by my Government. In my last address to Parliament I referred to a slight fall in wholesale prices. This trend was sharply accentuated in the months of February and March. Partly this was due to a general readjustment of prices all over the world, a process which started in 1950 but received a setback owing to the outbreak of the Korean war. With the prospect of an armistice in Korea in sight, this process of readjustment gathered strength. This has been assisted by an increased production of goods in the country coupled with increasing consumer resistance to high prices. The monetary and credit policy of my Government, initiated with a view to checking

inflation, has also contributed to the fall in prices. This sharp fall in the price level has caused difficulties to those engaged in business and industry, more especially in the textile industry. This is also leading to a fall in our export earnings. My Government are closely watching the situation to ensure that production and employment are not affected. It is their intention to take such action as might be necessary to assist in the stabilisation of prices at a reasonable level.

I am glad that a new Ministry of Production has been created. Production by State-owned industries is of vital importance and the creation of a new Ministry for this purpose indicates that special attention is going to be paid to it.

An assurance was given by Government last year to Parliament that a Press Commission would be appointed to consider various matters connected with the Press. My Government hope to appoint such a Commission in the near future. It is also proposed to place before Parliament a bill arising out of the recommendations of the Press Laws Enquiry Committee.

This session of Parliament will be mainly concerned with the Budget and there will probably not be much time for other legislation. A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1952-53 will be laid before you. The members of the House of the People will be required to consider and pass the demands for grants.

After the last session of the provisional Parliament, it became necessary to promulgate an Ordinance relating to the repealing of the Saurashtra (Abolition of Local Sea Customs Duties and imposition of) Port Development Levy. This Ordinance will be brought before you in the form of a new bill and you will be asked to consider and pass it. Another Ordinance was issued for the purpose of extenting the Displaced Persons (Claims) Act, 1950. A bill to replace this Ordinance will also be placed before you.

A number of bills which were introduced in the provisional Parliament have now lapsed. Some of these will be placed before you in so far as time permits. It is also proposed to place before Parliament a bill dealing with Preventive Detention.

One of the legislative measures which was discussed at considerable length in the provisional Parliament was the Hindu Code Bill. This could not be passed and, in common with other

pending bills, has lapsed. It is the intention of my Government to introduce a fresh legislation on this subject. It is proposed, however, to divide up the bill into certain parts and to place each part separately before Parliament, so as to facilitate its discussion and passage.

I have endeavoured to indicate to you some of the work that will be placed before this session of Parliament. I trust that your labours will bear fruit for the good of our people and that this new Parliament of the Democratic Republic of India will set an example, of friendly co-operation and efficient working. Your success will depend on the spirit of tolerance that governs your activities and the wisdom that inspires your efforts. I earnestly trust, therefore, that this wisdom and tolerance of spirit will always be with you.

13

OUR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

A foreigner unfamiliar with Indian conditions would, if he were to travel across this country, see so much diversity that he might easily think that India, instead of being a single nation, is an aggregate of nations, each one of which is different from the other. He would see many physical diversities of a far-reaching character, such as are usually to be seen only in a continent. He would see the snow-clad Himalayas at one end of the country and as he moves south, he would see the plains watered by the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Brahmaputra, and then the green table-land lying between the Vindhya, Aravali, Satpura, Sahyadri and the Nilgiri mountains. If he were to travel from west to east, he would see similar diversities and varieties. He would experience all types of climate; the extreme cold of the Himalayan regions, the scorching heat of the plains in summer, the record rainfall of 500 inches in the Assam hills, and the dry, arid climate of Jaisalmer where not even four inches of rainfall is recorded during the year. There is no food crop which cannot be grown in India, nor is there any fruit which cannot be cultivated here. There is no mineral which is not found in India nor is there any plant or animal which is unknown in the forests of this country.

By studying the people of the different regions of India, one can see the effect that climate has on the physical features,

*From address delivered at the inauguration of the All-India Cultural Conference at Delhi, 15 March 1951.

intellect, manner of living and the diet of a people, Similarly, there are several important languages spoken in this country without taking into account the vast number of dialects. Also, people of every known faith live in India and just as the dialects of this country are too numerous to be counted, it is not easy to count the exact number of sects into which the main religions of this country are divided. Naturally, it would not be surprising if, in view of these diversities, a perplexed foreigner exclaims that India is not one country but an aggregate of countries, and that it is not one nation but a collection of nations; for, to a person who does not delve deep beneath the surface of things, the diversities alone will be perceptible. But a careful examination reveals, beneath all these diversities. a unity which threads all these diversities into one, in the same way in which a silk thread unites different kinds of beautiful gems into a single necklace of which not a single gem is separate; and each gem not only charms with its beauty, but adds to the beauty of the others. This is not a poetic fancy but a well-established truth. As a result of the confluence of the numerous independent fountains and currents which have maintained their separate existence for thousands of years, a single stream of Indian culture flows over the sub-continent. It is our desire and our effort that it may continue to flow in the same manner as it has done so far and that it may make immortal those forces which have been able to withstand the ravages of time.

There is an eternal ethical current which has been flowing in our country, and which occasionally incarnates itself into living forms. It is our good fortune to have had in our midst a living human embodiment of this ethical faith—a person, who, by making us aware of that faith, infused new life into our lifeless bodies and put new cheer and courage into our dying hearts. The immortal principle he stood for is the principle of truth and ahimsa, which is vital not only for India but also for the continued existence of humanity.

We have already established a democratic form of government in this country which provides scope for the full development of the individual as well as that of the collective social group. There is usually a kind of opposition between the individual and society. The individual desises his own progress and prosperity and if it obstructs the progress of another individual, a conflict is bound to

occur between the two unless, of course, this conflict is resolved by each one by following the path of individual progress through the method of non-violence.

Our culture is rooted in the principle of non-violence, for we attach the greatest importance to the principle of ahimsa. Another name or form of ahimsa is sacrifice, just as another name or form of violence is self-aggrandisement which often finds expression in self-indulgence. According to our philosophy, however, even self-gratification can be obtained through renunciation. Our people have found the highest joy and self-realisation through renunciation. The Sruti says "Enjoy that which has been given unto you by Him." It is by this principle that we wish to resolve the conflict between individuals, between the individual and the group, between the communities and between nation and nation. Our whole ethical consciousness is suffured by this principle. It is because of this faith that we let different ideological currents flow freely in their own channels, different creeds and faiths grow and flourish without any restraint, and different languages develop and blossom to the fullest possible extent.

We assimilated people in different races into our own, absorbed their culture and permitted ours to mingle with that of the others and it was because of this that the links we established in other countries were forged with love and not with aggression. Never in our history did we use force to enslave other people to our power. If we won them, it was by winning their hearts and, therefore, traces of our influence are still to be found all over the world, even though we ourselves, have, in many respects, forgotten that ethical consciousness which gave us this influence over other countries.

Today, the most important problem before us is to find out how far this historic ethical consciousness, which has been the main motive force of the life of our common people, can prove useful to us in the changed conditions of the present age. No one can deny that, in this connection, there are two currents of thought in our country. Some people are of the opinion that in the modern industrial age, an ethical consciousness which teaches man the lessons of non-violence, truth and renunciation has no value. They believe that in the competitive economic system of today, ruthless self-aggradisement is absolutely necessary. We have,

however, to weight carefully this aggressive egoism of the industrial age against the principles of humility and courtesy which are inherent in our ethical system and adopt one as the driving force and power in the revolutionary reconstruction of our country.

It would not be out of place to say that, in the West, the inevitable and unavoidable result of the aggressive egoism has been the emergence of the theory of class war on the one hand and, on the other, heartless political and economic exploitation, reinforced by imperialism. We have to decide whether cultural progress must inevitably be through the principle of 'might is right' or whether it can also be achieved on the basis of that moral awareness to which, centuries ago, the sages drew the attention of our people. It is no doubt true that, though we may wish to, we cannot keep ourselves aloof from the progress that the West has made in the scientific sphere; nor can we remain unaffected by its developments in the sphere of industry; nor do I think that such an attempt is desirable or necessary. The only consideration that we have to keep in view is how we can harmonise science with our indigenous culture. I think, while considering this question, we have to remember that notwithstanding the many natural calamities and man-made evils which have afficted our country from time to time, the creative urge of our people has not been destroyed or diminished. Empires rose and fell, different faiths flourished and declined and we suffered foreign aggression and oppression. Nature and man heaped numerous calamities upon us. Yet we were able to maintain our existence, preserve our culture, and retain our vital and creative powers. Even during the darkest days, we were able to produce such thinkers and men of action who would, by right, have occupied the highest place in any age in the history of the world. During the period of our political slavery, we were able to produce such a man of action, faith and revolutionary ideas as Gandhiji, such a talented poet as Rabindranath Tagore and such great yogis as Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi. During the same period, we were also to produce scholars and scientists to whom the world still pays homage.

Even amidst circumstances which has destroyed some of the famous civilisations of the world, we have not only been able to maintain our existence but have also preserved our intellectual and

moral glory. It appears to me that the main reason for our survival is that our collective consciousness rests on an ethical foundation which is stronger, deeper and wider than the mountains, oceans and the sky. The collective consciousness of the nations which have perished was imprisoned in the cage of race and language. It may well be that this cage was of gold, but nevertheless, it was a cage which enfeebled the inmate, with the result that when the cage was broken or had to be changed, national consciousness had become altogether helpless, nay even lifeless. But our collective consciousness, or in other words our culture, has never remained imprisoned within racial, regional or linguistic boundaries. As I have already said, these different aspects of our life have been only different channels of its expression, and never have they been bonds which crushed and stifled it. On the other hand, the fabric of our culture is woven by the threads of humanity. It is no doubt true that we have not been able to make it permeate every aspect of our life. To a certain extent, our fall was also due to our failure to make it the light of our life. But all the same it is there and we have to give it is due importance. Another point which we ought to consider is that this culture is the very life of our nation. It is this culture alone which unites our cities and villages, different regions and religions, and different classes and castes, with one another. They might differ in all other aspects, but this is the only bond which unites them. It was the realisation of this truth by Bapu that led him to rely upon this ethical consciousness to bring the Indian masses, under the leadership of our intelligentsia, into the current of the revolution. The mass mind suddenly became active under the call of ahimsa, service and sacrifice, simply because these ideals had been dormant in it for innumerable centuries. The far-sightedness of Bapu lay in the fact that he made the consciousness vibrating in the heart of the common people the main driving force of our revolution; in this also lay his success. Even when a section of the masses had become maddened by communal passions, Bapu was able to control them in Bihar and Delhi by appealing to this ethical consciousness.

It is for you to consider whether this ethical consciousness needs to be modified to suit the modern dynamic age. But, as far as I can see, it is basically in harmony with the needs of the modern age. The modern industrial civilisation cannot be

confined within regional, racial or linguistic boundaries, for they are obstacles in its further development. It can rest only on a universal foundation. In my opinion, the conflict that we find in the West today is mainly due to the insistence of the people, under the influence of their out-moded social psychology, on maintaining these divisions. The fact that our culture never gave much importance to such boundaries becomes significant in this connection. I feel, therefore, that if we have to escape the repetition of the injustices and atrocities which produce the conflicts of modern times, it is necessary for us to build our economic system on the foundation of the ethical consciousness of our country, and to make selflessness and social welfare the main driving force of our economy, rather than personal profit or self-gratification.

Today, besides the question of cultural harmony in India, we have to consider how we can make the beautiful literary works in different regional languages available for the enjoyment of the people. Is it not desirable that the literary societies of each regional language get their literary works printed in the federal script, that is Devanagari ? I believe, at least in northern India, where the languages are inter-related, a literary work printed in the Devanagari script would be enjoyed by almost all the people because of the close similarly in all these languages.

Further, the establishment of an academy which could initiate an exchange of literary ideas through translation would be worthwhile. It can also, at the same time, provide the necessary inspiration to the literatures of the country, help in the creation of standards of literary criticism and in the creation of good and enduring literature Literature is one of the manifest expressions of culture, others being music, dancing, painting architecture and sculpture. India has continued to express its national unity through these various forms and, I believe, you will reinforce and vitalise this tendency still further.

14

FELLOW FEELING AND COMMUNAL HARMONY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

We have a number of problems, but some of them are of a basic nature and underlie all others. One such problem is that of communal harmony in this country. We have got many religions and communities. Unfortunately, sometimes communal harmony gets disturbed for one reason or another. There would be nothing very peculiar about it if quarrels occured only occassionally, because quarrels do occur between brothers, between husband and wife, between father and son. All such quarrels are soon made up and the basic affection remains unchaged. Similarly, even if one community occasionally finds some cause for quarrel with another, that should not lead them to make this quarrel a source of perpetual irritation or to give it anything but a temporary character. Fortunately, your region has singular history of toleration and I am told that Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews have all been living peacefully for centuries. Even a casual visitor like me, while passing along the roads, can see temples, churches and synagogues side by side and one can understand that this was possible only because there has been tolerance and regard for all the religions.

My belief is —and it is the opinion of all true followers of all religions—that true religion is concerned with belief in a supernatural power. Since that supernatural power is above all and all others are like the children of that power all human beings must

* From speech at public meeting, Ernakulam, March 29, 1951.

be, more or less, like brothers and sister to one another. If that is the teaching of all religions, than, in spite of differences in the way in which we worship God, there is no reason why we should not really be brothers. Here is India, our ancestors, the *rishis* of old, realised this and aid down once and for all that the truth is one but the wise reach it by different paths. We want a realisation of this truth not only as a matter of intellectual conviction, but also as a rule of conduct to be followed every movement of our lives. It is impossible for us to rise to any height without a realisation of this truth. If we quarrel amongst ourselves, it is obvious that we cannot make any progress. All the effort that is wasted in suppressing one another can very well be utilised in promoting our common prosperity. This is one of the fundamental problems which this country has been tackling from time immemorial, but its urgency needs to be re-emphasised today when we have freed ourselves from foreign domination and are left to our own resources to shape our destinies.

Another fundamental question which naturally affects all of us is that of our economic set-up. We have, in this country, vast masses of humanity, some of them in extremely, poor circumstances, not having enough food, clothing, and shelter. There must be millions and millions of men and women who are in such a condition in this country. On the other hand, we have only a few persons who are in affluent and happy circumstances. What we need is not the suppression of those at the top but the uplifting of those who are at the bottom and I cannot understand the philosophy which aims at levelling down instead of levelling up. What is needed is really the raising of the general standard of living. Sometimes jealousies are roused when a poor man sees his neighbour in happy and affluent circumstances. That is a natural instinct and we have to tolerate it, but we must be prepared to explain that they will happier if both rose higher still and no attempt was made to pull down the affluent and happy.

Mahatmaji laid stress on non-violence. It is on non-violence alone that an ordered society can be based. There is no use creating violence in the hope that by violence we shall be able to suppress violence. We have a saying in the north that you cannot wash mud with mud. For washing mud, you need pure water. For getting rid of violence, you require something much better than violence. You require non-violence and that is Mahatma

Gandhi's teaching. He saw instinctively that in a country like India where we have so many religions and so many languages, unless non-violence is a basic factor in everyday life, there will be no end to our quarrels or problems. That is true not only of us, but it is true of the whole world. India is a sort of microcosm which represents the macrocosm of the world at large. I have therefore emphasised, wherever it has been possible for me to do so, the importance of non-violence in our everyday life, in our dealings with one another and also in our dealings with other countries. There are, no doubt, circumstances which sometimes force our hands to do something against our better judgment. One can understand that and one may be prepared even to excuse such cases. But, if we knowingly deviate from the path, then it becomes a disease. What we need is a genuine effort to shape our own lives through non-violence. If in spite of that there are deviations, it does not matter because we shall be able, ultimately, to come to the right course. As night follows day, the difficulties which are facing us today will disappear if we fully realise that. If we once realise the full truth, there is no problem which cannot be solved. Therefore, it is essential that we must pay due regard to what Gandhiji said. We must not rest content with uttering his name only, but should gladly follow the path which he laid down for us. I desire to impress upon you, friends, that we cannot do better than walk in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. There must be a genuine effort to follow that path. Once that is done, the rest becomes easy.

15

INDIAN UNITY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The sense of oneness pervading our country, from one part of the country to the other, needs to be re-emphasised in the context of the heated controversy we have had on the question of the re-organisation of States. We should not think that our unity is a matter of course and it need not be thought of or cared for. It should also not be imagined that it is capable of bearing all kinds of strains to which it may be exposed. The fact is that our unity, although very ancient and well-rooted, needs to be nurtured and strengthened, at least at the present moment. We know that although our cultural unity is ages old, it failed to give us political unity, and we succumbed to foreign invasions times without number. Fortunately, now we have attained political unity also. Under the circumstances, it will be easier for us to reinforce and preserve our cultural and political unity. But politics plays *havoc* occasionally and it is necessary to beware of it.

Let us not, therefore, imagine that this political unity does not require our careful attention from day to day. Imagine, what would be our state if this political unity were to be lost ? As it is, India is the second biggest nation in the world. With the exception of China, there is no other country which has got such a large population and is governed by one Constitution and ruled by one set of Ministers. I do not think there has been another

* From speech at a public meeting, Madurai, August 16, 1956.

instance of an election in which something like 180 million people were enfranchised. A second general election will be coming during the next few months. In this age numbers count more than anything else. India, with more than 360 Million people, can play a great part in the word today. But imagine what would happen if we were again to be separated, one from the other, and instead of having one India we had a number of independent States. It is necessary that today we, who are 360 million people, stand united as one man. Unity does not mean dull uniformity. A distinctive feature of our nation is unity within diversity. Here in these parts women are wearing jewels. Each little bit of stone that is there has its own value and its own position, and yet the whole jewel is quite different from the individual stones. As a whole piece of jewellery, it is not only very valuable but much more beautiful. India is like such a piece of jewellery with all its variety. Let us not break any of the stones which constitute the whole piece of jewellery. Each one of the stones much be preserved in its place, in all its glory, in all its beauty and in all its splendour. Then alone will the jewellery shine at its best.

There is no occasion for undesirable rivalries. We should all help each other in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. I know that occasionally there are differences. That cannot be avoided. But we should try to keep them within bounds. They should not be permitted to destroy the fundamental unity of country. Mahatma Gandhi used to tell us : "Be prepared always to give, not to take". This is true not only of individuals but also of groups and communities. If every group thinks of the other, there will be no group left unthought of. The trouble arises because instead of caring for others we think of our own particular group. The result is that the group alone tries to safeguard its interests and no outsider bother about it. If each group were to think of others and not of itself, then each group will be thought of by all others except itself. This will make a difference. It is, therefore, necessary in the interests for the country that we think of the nation as a whole and not of narrow groups within it. This is all the more necessary in the present context when certain regrettable incident have happend. I am hoping that is only a passing phase.

Fortunately, you have had no such trouble here; I hope, you

will not have it in future either. I am quite sure you will think of the country as a whole, for you are in one corner of it, although a very big corner. If you look at the map of India from this corner, you will find that either you are at the foot or at the top. In whatever position, your responsibility is great. If you are at the foot, you have to carry the whole weight of the body; if you are at the top, the head has to share the burden. I, therefore, hope that will never forget the country or ignore its interest. We are acquiring a new place in world affairs. Our Prime Minister has been devoting himself whole-heartedly to the maintenance of world peace. You can understand with how much greater force, emphasis and authority he can carry forward this mission if he is convinced that in his own country there is no trouble at all.

We are, at the present moment, engaged in working out the Second Five Year Plan. The First Plan has proved to be more successful than we thought it would in the initial stages. Let us hope that the Second will be even more successful than the First. That can happen only if all the people co-operate in the working of the Plan and put their shoulders to it. There are people who are trying to maintain the balance in different parts of the country; you can rest assured that they will not neglect the interests of any region. But there is such a thing as priority. Even when we go to the temple, everybody cannot get *darshan* at the same time; we have to go one after another. Similarly, when we go to a river to bathe, it is not always possible for all to bathe together. To stand in the queue and to take your turn does not mean you are being neglected. It only means that steps are being taken to see that everyone gets an opportunity. Unless this is done, equality of opportunity cannot be ensured. Similarly, in the matter of the Five Year Plans, everybody has to be thought of, but not at the same time. And may rest assured that no one will be ultimately neglected.

16

THE COLLECTIVE GOOD*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I would like to congratulate you for having established this society to help literateurs and for having taken up the construction of this "Saraswati Mandir". I have great pleasure in laying its foundation-stone.

No one can deny that the life of literateurs in our country has been rather hard and full of struggle for the last many years. As you have stated in your report, "In a country under the sway of a foreign state and a foreign language literary activities can be carried on only with considerable difficulty". Naturally, so long as the foreigners were ruling our country, literaturs had to suffer numerous difficulties. There has been some improvement in their condition after the advent of freedom; but even today there does not exist the atmosphere required for the creation of literature of a high order. Though we have resolved that all our public administrative work would be carried on in the languages of this country after some years, yet neither the educationists, nor the students, have been able to free themselves from that lure of the English language which it had during the British regime. A large number of our educated people seem to be under the impression that our indigenous languages do not have, and probably cannot have, literature of such a high order as that in the English language. They do not, therefore, have much love for the literature of their

*Translation of speech delivered in Hindi at the foundation-stone laying ceremoney of the Saraswati Mandir at Allahabad, on February 20, 1951.

own languages. I believe that many of the financial difficulties which our literateurs have to bear are in some measure due to his attitude of our intelligentsia, for their works do not acquire that popularity with the educated classes as the works of literateurs in other countries do.

When I say this, I do not imply in the least that our people should have no love for literature of other languages. On the other hand, I am firmly convinced that the knowledge of English is extremely essential on account of its international importance and also on account of its having a literature of a very high order. Moreover, no person can be a successful devotee of the Muses unless he has soaked himself with the literature of all ages and of many countries. In fact, without doing so, no person can be considered to be properly educated. But, at the same time, I would like to emphasise that we cannot have a proper appreciation of the literature of other languages unless we have first cultivated a taste for it by studying our own literature. I am sure that by doing so we can also free our writers to a very great extent from their financial worries. I have purposely used the expression "to a very great extent" because I know that their financial difficulties would not be over even then. Our present economic system does not permit them to secure their due reward for the un-ending pleasure and vital exhilaration, the sweet dreams and high ideals which they provide to their innumerable readers. Under the modern system, few economic activities are carried on for the benefit of society. Naturally, it often happens that collective welfare is sacrificed at the altar of self-interest. It is, therefore, no surprise that publishers acquire all rights in the works of our writers and poets. The brightest jewels of their ideas are appropriated at a very low price and the publishers make large profits while the authors lead precarious lives. I, therefore, feel highly satisfied to find that you have taken a constructive step to remove this injustice and exploitation.

I am convinced that the adoption of the method of co-operation for collective well-being—the path of *Sarvodaya*—is the only one by which injustice and exploitation can be entirely abolished from human society. You have adopted this method and, therefore, deserve our congratulations all the more. Since time immemorial, our country has held that the only way of carrying happiness and peace into the life of the Group and the

Individual is for every individual to shape his conduct so that the lives of all other human beings is made pleasant. I believe, it was for this reason that the principle of non-violence acquired such a great importance and significance in our country. The father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, by placing this ideal before us, was able to infuse new life, energy and creative power in the people.

It is my firm belief that if you remain true and loyal to this principle of creative activity and co-operative effort, you would succeed in becoming a great force in the work of reconstruction. God Almighty has given you the creative urge by virtue of which you are able to express, in clear and moving words, the thoughts and problems of your fellow beings. You can also inspire them with the will to action and the determination to join battle against the problems that are facing them. Today, millions of our countrymen are oppressed by frustration and misery. Our independence would have no meaning if we are unable to bring new hope to their unhappy lives. Those amongst us who are politicians have been trying to improve conditions by political means. It does not, however, lie in the power either of politicians or of engineers to awaken enthusiasm, energy, and devotion in the hearts of the people. It can be done only by poets and writers. But it is extremely necessary that literature instead of being a song of love should be the creative energy of the mother. It should be a means of creative activity rather than a more object of enjoyment and pleasure. Many of our literateurs made a glorious contribution to our struggle for freedom. By their works, they fired the minds of the people with the irresistible urge for freedom.

Today, we need a different kind of literature—a literature which may make the people realise the need for collective endeavour. Much of the present indifference or inertia is, I believe, due to the fact that in our modern literature, we do not hear the echo of that ideal. It is my belief that the achievement of freedom was not so difficult as our present task is. At that time, our problem was merely to uproot the political power and sovereignty of a handful of foreigners. Today, we are faced with the gigantic task of providing education, housing and food for about 350 million people. We have, for this purpose, to expand our productive power. That can be possible only when every individual in our country stops depending upon the Government for everything. Every one should readily devote himself to productive, creative,

and constructive activities. The devotees of literature can make a very important contribution to the fulfilment of this mission and I hope they will surely do so.

There are persons who give the lable of progressivism only to such literature which describes the class struggle in society and incites the so-called exploited classes to rise against their exploiters. India, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, had discovered a new way of abolishing social exploitation. In our country, the ideal of those who hold the reins of social of political power is to establish a classless society, free from all exploitation. We have, through non-violent action, been able to wrest our freedom from a great power of the world. It should be still easier for us to create a new society without giving class struggle a violent form. Men of letters can be of very great help in this respect. Our country requires that all over literature should ring with the call of creative and constructive activity. It is my hope that your "Samsad" would guide the literatures to follow this path and move in this direction. I also believe that those working within the temple, the foundation-stone of which I am laying today, would receive an inspiration to work for harmony and thus, bring happiness and prosperity to all.

17

TRUE ART*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I have no pretension to any knowledge of art. But, in spite of that, I get thrilled whenever I come across any beautiful picture, or an inspiring passage in a drama or a beautiful piece of sculpture. The only test which, as a person completely ignorant of the technique of art that I am, I can apply in judging a work of art is the one which I have just mentioned, namely that it should be able to thrill a person like me. I sometimes think that this is really the test which most people apply because I believe most people are like me.

In India, we have had a long tradition of art which goes back to many centuries. As in other countries, here also the original motive was religious and I feel even now most of our artists draw their inspiration from some kind of religion or spiritualism. To my mind, true art is not a mere imitation and copy of what generally are see either in human or vegetable life. I am just coming from a Flower Show where I saw very beautiful blooms and I was wondering if our artists could really give us more beautiful things than Nature has given us. If the artist does not merely copy and gives us something which cannot be imitated, then that is true art. It is, therefore, not only actual experience but something which afflicts man and which he cannot perceive with his senses.

*Speech delivered while opening the All India Art and Craft Exhibition in New Delhi on February 17, 1951.

It is just possible that in some cases the art which represents the culture of one country cannot be appreciated by the people of another country. But, all differences apart, there is a language of art which is different from the spoken language which appeals not so much to the heart as to the intellect. Here lies the difference between the two. The language of art appeals to the heart. It is, therefore, by its very nature a language which can be understood universally. I also feel that an art can bring out the best in the human spirit. I rely upon artists of this country to give us back our soul, to enable us to regain what we have lost.

It has been our tradition that the Ruler of the State used to patronise art and I believe that has been so in other countries also. Our art has suffered on account of lack of that patronage. Time has come when the State should give to art all the patronage it requires and deserves. Sitting in the Government House, I sometimes wonder if Your Excellencies would really prefer to see some thing which is Indian to something which is not Indian. I do not know what your Excellencies would like to see but it is my feeling that you would like things that are India. I sometimes reflect on the desirability of decorating the Government House in the Indian style, replacing all that is not indigenous. It does not imply that what we have got from foreign countries is inferior. Your Excellencies have seen much of your own countries and if you know something more of India in the Government House, you will appreciate it better. Therefore, it is my ambition that, before I leave the Government House, I should get the present designs of decoration replaced. I shall feel then that I have done something which perhaps had not been done up till now. It is for the artists to help me in that work.

18

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I thank you for the honour you have done me by presenting this address of welcome. Ever since I landed here this morning, I have been the recipient of kindness and good wishes all round. The streets through which I passed have been thronged with people on both sides, all expressing their greetings to the President of India. I am not vain enough to think that the great welcome is intended for me personally. It is really an expression of your joy at the attainment of freedom and of a status which enables the people of this country to elect one from amongst themselves as Head of the State of this vast land.

I have listened with great interest to the address in which you have spoken about the difficulties which you, as a Corporation, are facing. I think the problems are the same all over the country. Our cities are growing beyond all recognition. Big cities have grown three times, and sometimes four times their size. Even smaller places have, within the last 15 or 20 years, grown to double or truble their old size. All these towns and cities provide amenities on the basis of population. Now that their population has become twice or four ties of what it was, new problems naturally come up. These problems are arising at a time when our financial position is none too happy. You have, therefore, to work with patience and also to conserve your energy and all your resources and use them to the best possible advantage of the

* Reply to the civic address presented to him at Madras on April 6, 1951.

masses at large. I am glad to learn that you have take up the work of slum clearance and have made much progress. I hope, after some time, you will be in a position to say that Madras is free from the ugly spots known as slums.

Your demands for a reallocation of the sources of revenue, I am sure, will receive the best consideration from the authorities concerned. The Government of India will, naturally, consider the report made by the Committee which has been appointed by themselves. In reallocating the sources of revenue, they have also to take into consideration the demands of the States. As a matter of fact, one of the problems with which the Government of India are faced is the problem of allocating the sources of revenue as between the States and themselves. We are, as you know, carrying on according to certain arrangements which were made before we attained independence. Until better times come or until some other agreement is made, the existing arrangement has to be continued. I suppose the same is true with regard to municipal bodies. But, I hope something will be done to enable the various institutions and departments which serve the people to have sufficient revenue for themselves.

Apart from the questions which the Corporation has to face at the present moment, we have to realise also that our independence is only about three years old and, like all young plants, it has got to be nutured with care and diligence. Our history has not been very happy in some respects. In spite of all the apparent differences, it is true that there has been a certain amount of unity in this country, and that is our cultural unity. It has survived all kinds of onslaughts. But, we did not have the kind of political unity which we have today. Although, due to the partition, we have lost two wings in the north-west and the north-east, still the country, as it is today, is bigger than the India which, at any time in its history was brought under the aegis of one rule. There were, in India, empire during the time of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim rulers and also during the time of the English. But, those empires did not cover as much area and as much population as does the Republic of India today. The Constitution which we have framed with so much care and with so much labour, governs not only that part of India which was formerly adminisred under the Government of India Act, 1935, but also that part of India which used to be under the rule of the Indian Princes. This has been possible due to the patriotism of

the Princes and the statesmanship and farsightedness of the leaders and also the people who have woked for unity.

As I have said, we have an unhappy history in some respects. In the part, there were empires but there was always a tendency, particularly in the outlying parts, to cut away from the Centre. Although, there were empires and there were Chakravartis whose writ ran through the whole country, in a way, there was never one Government ruling over the entire country. Now, one rule and one kind of law governs the whole land. We have, therefore, to guard against any repetition of what had happened in the past. That fissiparous tendency to cut away from the Centre has to be checked somehow. Although, the various States are being governed more or less in an autonomous fashion, the whole of the vast land must remain under the Constitution. Any separatist tendency which may be visible today or which may not be visible today, but may come up tomorrow, has to be checked. For that purpose, we have to inculcate, in the minds of the people at large, the value of unity. Today, the world has become small in certain respects. On account of the advance of science, distance has practically been annihilated. It is becoming every day more and more difficult for small States to survive. We are all hoping that the time will come when conflicts between States will cease and we shall have One World.

We, in this country, have to preserves our own identity. We can do so only if we keep this entire country together. Then alone shall be able to demonstrate the strength which is necessary to keep this independence and keep it in a position in which it will be able to protect itself and the people and help other countries as well in time of need. It is, therefore, necessary that we should realise the great value of political unity and preserve it as best as we can. I am anxious that people should also realise their duty maintain, protect and preserve the hard-won independence. That is the primary duty of every Indian today.

We have, undoubtedly, had a great many problems during the last thre years of our independence. It must be said to the credit of the various administrations in the Centre and the States, that they have managed to survive many difficulties under which they might well have broken down. We have had innumerable difficulties—political, communal, social, and last but not least, financial and economic. Even today, we are facing a situation

with regard to food which is by no means an easy one and which in some respects is the most difficult. But, let us have faith in ourselves and let us hope that we shall be able to conquer the present difficulties as we had done in the past.

I know the Government is trying its best to solve the food problem. We are importing a large quntity of foodgrains from foreign countries. We are also trying to increase production in this country. But, whatever the Government might do, the problem cannot be solved by it alone. The people at large have to take it up as their own problem. Each one of us should regard it as his problem and try to solve it. It is only in that spirit that a big crisis like this can be got over. I hope that with the mental, moral and spiritual as well as the material resources which the people possess, they will be able to get over the great difficulty. I know your State has had several bad seasons one after another. Naturally, your troubles are great. I come from a region which is also in the grip of the same kind of difficulties. Perhaps, if I am not exaggerating, it is in a worse condition than any other part of the country. Let us all be prepared to meet the difficulties in a spirit of hopefulness and determination. Then alone can we succeed.

There are other problems facing us. Nobody can say today what is going to happen tomorrow. The world is, as it were, on the brink of a precipice and one wrong step may result in a serious situation. We do not know what will happen. It is possible we get out of it; it is equally possible we may fall into it. Our attempt, as far as possible, should be to prevent an extension of conflict. Of course, we do not have the resources or the material strength which other nations possess. Nor, being a new nation and being so young, are we in a position to exercise that amount of influence which perhaps other nations exercise. But, what little we possess, we have placed at the disposal of the world for the purpose of preventing that catastrophe from actually happening. Therefore, whether we look at it from the point of view of our internal difficulties or from the point of view of the international situation, we have to be ready to meet any emergency.

Our financial position is not at all good. We have had a deficit budget which compelled us to impose fresh taxation. The States, in many cases, have also had deficit budgets. That is the

position which we have had to face. It must, however, be said that in spite of all these difficulties, we have not given up those social objectives which we have set before ourselves. We have been trying our best to carry forward the work of social amelioration. We shall, I hope, continue to do so and whatever sacrifices are required of the people, will be fourthcoming. In course of time, when the present troubles are over, we may be able to say to the world that we passed through crisis after crisis, but with God's grace we always emerged successfully. We have to remember that when a nation is born, it has to face in the beginning, certain difficulties. We are now going through such a period. When we have passed these difficulties, we hope we shall grow into a strong, healthy and prosperous nation.

I think you for the honour you have done me and for all the kindness you have shown to me.

19

HINDI SHOULD KEEP ITS DOORS OPEN*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The work of propagating the national language in this State has been going on for the last twenty years. You have already been told what progress has been made in this direction during this period. Since independence, it has been felt that this work should be expedited as far as possible so that Hindi could be adopted as a medium of inter-State contacts and business in the various spheres.

In this connection we should remember a few things, because it is necessary that we avoid misunderstandings which tend to create difficulties, at least psychological difficulties. The first thing which those who speak Hindi should keep in mind is that Hindi is not to be propagated in place of or at the expense of any regional language. All these languages have not only to continue to be used in their respective regions but their growth and enrichment has to be planned, and in this work every help should be extended by all sections of the people. If this fact is lost sight of, the result would be that in non-Hindi speaking areas Hindi *prachar* would inspire opposition rather than trust and popular interest. Therefore, while encouraging Hindi, nothing should be done which

*From speech at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, September 13, 1956.

impedes the progress of regional languages : and it should be clearly understood that in those areas Hindi has to be used only for purposes of inter-State contacts. We find sometimes Hindi being pitched against regional lauguages whereas actually their rival is English and not Hindi.

As we know, universities are springing up in all the States and they are encouraging the local languages. To promote the growth and systematic development of those languages and to enrich their literatures is a primary duty of these universities. Some of these universities have already adopted regional languages as the media of instruction, and we can to sure that in universities where this has not been done so far, the switch-over to the language of the region is bound to take place sooner or later. It is, therefore, a mistake to imagine that when English ceases to be the medium of instruction in the universities, its place will necessarily be taken by Hindi. In your own State, which is a bilingual State, Hindi and Marathi have been recognised as a media of university instruction and more and more work is being done through them in Government offices and the universities. This trend will continue to gain momentum even when this part of Madhya Pradesh joins another State. Even there, the two regional languages, Marathi and Gujarati, will dominate the scene of university education. Actually, the Gujarat and Poona universities have already accepted Gujarati and Marathi respectively in place of English. These universities have accepted the enrichment and development of their respective languages as one of their principal aims. Similarly, wherevere Marathi is spoken, English will be replaced by Marathi, just as in Hindi-speaking areas Hindi will take its place, and in the south, the four south Indian languages. But in the sphere of business, and countrywide contacts, English will be replaced by Hindi. To assign a sphere for the national language wider than this is neither necessary nor, in my opinion, desirable. If there is any misunderstanding in this regard, it is the duty of all those who speak or work for Hindi to remove it.

The other thing which must always be kept in view is that the proper growth of all Indian languages and the enrichment of their literatures is our desideratum. When I presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held here as far back as 1936, I stressed that it was not in the interest of Hindi to boycott words of non-Hindi stock. Words of exotic origin which are now current in Hindi

should not be excluded and replaced by Hindi or Sanskrit words. I am of the same opinion even today. I feel that Hindi should keep its doors open to words of other languages which have been or can be absorbed in it. Take the case of English. If you take an English dictionary and compare its latest edition with one of its early editions, many additional words will be found to have been added to the language. Sometime back I happened to see an old dictionary. That dictionary, in volume, is hardly one-tenth of the present-day edition of the dictionary, although, in course of time, the types in which the latest edition is printed have grown smaller. This is entirely due to the addition of new words. I am told when the Oxford Dictionary was being compiled, a good many new words came to be added to the English language and while the compilers were still tackling the concluding portions of the dictionary, a supplement had to be printed in order to accommodate the new words. This shows that English is a living and growing language, and also explains its all-round progress. As our Prime Minister said the other day, 70 per cent of the scientific and technical journals of the world are brought out in English. If the supporters of the English language had adopted the policy of boycotting words of foreign origin and decided to confine themselves to words known to Chaucer and Shakespeare, it would not have made this phenomenal progress.

We want and shall gladly accept all the help that other languages can give in enriching Hindi. I would like the different shades and meanings of Hindi words in other languages to be properly studied. I am not sure if academicians would accept this proposal, but eventually they will have to do it and accept not only words of other languages, but also countenance some relaxation in the rigid rules of Hindi grammar. Today about 42 per cent of our people speak Hindi. If the remaining 58 per cent are also to learn the language, rigid adherence to old forms of grammar will have to be given up. I have seen some Hindi works written by Marathi-speaking and Bengali-speaking writers who were by no means scholars of Hindi but only of their respective languages. These works had a distinctive style and mode of expression. We must show some indulgence to such variations in style and consider them as part of Hindi. I hope this is the way to ensure the development and popularisation of Hindi.

We also hear sometimes that some people are not favourably inclined towards Hindi. They say that English is a more widely understood language and we shall not be able to do without it. As in the case of Hindi organisations in the north and elsewhere, I have also been connected with the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in whose functions I have often participated. When I was there last month, Shri M. Satyanarayana told me that in the south where Tamil, Telugu, Kanada and Malayalam were spoken, the number of English-knowing people did not exceed one million. He took these figures from the latest census report. The number of people who knew Hindi, on the other hand, was not less than five million, that is, five times the number of English-knowing people. How can we say that people in the south do not know Hindi ? It is another matter that some of these people are scholars of English, whereas those who learn Hindi do not generally attain scholarly heights. That is perhaps because it is not necessary, for the present, to make an intensive study of Hindi. As English is still being used as the language of newspapers and administration in Government offices, it creates the delusion that the use of English is more common and that English-knowing people are larger in number than those who have studied Hindi and passed various examinations in it. The statistics I have given are really surprising. I hope that more facts will be known when the Official Language Commission's Report is published. In any case, I do not think that it is so very difficult to make Hindi our national language.

Sometimes it is also said that more people are not cultivating Hindi because its study has not been made compulsory. This question arose in Madras a few years ago. The Government did not make Hindi compulsory but instead appointed a Hindi teacher in every school. Even under this arrangement, about 70 to 80 per cent students in Madras are studying Hindi. It is, indeed, a happy augury that such a large percentage of students is studying the Hindi language even when it is an optional subject.

Let us hope that the work of Hindi *prachar* will continue to progress throughout the country. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, where a very large number of people know Hindi, this work should not be difficult at all. In Maharashtra even those who do not know Hindi are not opposed to it. It is not the intention that anyone should give up his mothertongue; on the other hand, all

languages spoken in the country should be provided an opportunity of all-round development. Their literature must be enriched. At the same time Hindi should be cultivated in non-Hindi-speaking areas only far transacting all-India or inter-State business. Let me hope your efforts in this direction will be crowned with success.

20

HINDI, ENGLISH AND THE REGIONAL LANGUAGES*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The medium of instruction plays a very important part not only in promoting an interest in knowledge but also in enabling people to achieve a high standard in different subjects. It is not surprising that our Government should have taken a decision that our own languages should be the media of instruction right up to the university level. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that such literature should develop as would meet the requirements of students in the higher classes. This is a question of time.

There is no question of conflict between any State language and Hindi. I think that if there is any conflict, it is between English and the Indian languages amongst which Hindi is one. Even that conflict is only in regard to the use of a language for official purposes. What is required is that we develop our languages in such a way that they may take their place amongst the richest languages of the world. I have no doubt they are capable of being so developed. As most of them have Sanskrit as their background there is no doubt also that they can draw upon that rich language in making up such deficiency as these may be in finding technical terms and expressions which may be required. We should not be too particular about one language or another in the matter

*Speech while inauguarating the Telugu Academy of Science and History at Hyderabad, August 21, 1959,

of technical terms. The idea should be so popularise them and if there is any English word which has become so popular that it has to be retained, there is nothing wrong in retaining it. Similarly, if there is an expression which has to remain, nothing is lost by retaining it, In all such matters we have to adopt the golden mean, and find out what is most convenient and serviceable from the point of view of the country. I hope as a result of the work of your institution it will be possible in due course to enrich your language, Telugu, and introduce it in the universities in Andhra Pradesh right up to the degree and doctorate levels, so that any justification for maintaining a foreign language as the medium of instruction in our colleges and universities may be removed. It is inconceivable to me that a free country should depend for the purposes of its administration and business on a foreign language, however, rich that foreign language may be. We should not hesitate to learn foreign languages, especially a rich language like English from which we have derived such great benefit. But it is altogether a different proposition to place English over the head of our own languages. The sooner we take to the more natural course of adopting our own languages the better for us. I am sure the people will understand such a step, because, after all, it is not the few people who were educated through the medium of Engligh who now count in this country but the masses. And the masses can be approached and reached only through the regional languages.

We should not worry ourselves at this stage about what the all-India language should be. Let us confine ourselves to the State languages and once that question is decided and settled in a practical way, so that Telugu is used in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil in Tamilnad, Hindi in the Hindi-speaking areas, Bengali in Bengal, Marathi in Maharashtra, Gujarati in Gujarat, Oriya in Orissa and Assamese in Assam, I am sure it will not be impossible for us to reach an agreement without any hitch about having one language for all-India purposes.

Not on the score of any superiority or any richness but as a matter of practical experience, Hindi has been adopted as the language for all-India purposes. It will be able to replace English without any difficulty. Therefore, I am not so worried about it as to be constantly talking about it. Things will settle down without any effort on the part of the Hindi-speaking people, There can be no other language which can be adopted for all-India purposes and

I have no doubt in my mind that when people have to choose between English and an Indian language or between one Indian language and another, they will prefer an Indian language and it will not be any language except Hindi. When that happens—and that will happen one day—Hindi will become really a binding force just as in the past Sanskrit used to be a binding force which kept together north and south, east and west.

21

HINDI WILL NEVER BE IMPOSED ON ANYONE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Hyderabad was looked upon as a fertile field for Hindi literacy campaigns long before Hindi was adopted as India's official language. In fact, Hyderabad and the neighbouring areas, which have generally been referred to as the Deccan in history, had been something of a laboratory for experiments in linguistics. When the Muslim kings carved out their kingdoms and settled here about five hundred years ago Persian and the languages of North India came to the Deccan with them. The intermingling of the languages of the North and the South considerably helped the process of the evolution of a common language which both the Hindus and the Muslims understood and used. Let us look upon Hindi and Urdu as one language basically. Whatever name we give to this language, the writers and patrons of Dakhini contributed a great deal towards its evolution. It would be no exaggeration to say that the entire Hindi world is indebted to the people of Hyderabad and the Deccan.

While speaking on Hindi and the desirability of propagating it in the country. I would like to say something by way of allaying the misgivings of some of our non-Hindi-speaking brethren. I fully realise and appreciate the place that one's mother-tongue occupies in one's line. When one talks of the need of propagating a language in a region, the foremost thing to be asked is : is

*Translation of convocation address, originally delivered in Hindi, Hyderabad Hindi Prachar Sabha, 3 August 1960,

this step likely to have an adverse effect on the mother-tongue of the region, and has all that is possible been done to safeguard the place of the mother-tongue in the life of the people of the region ? I do not think anyone in the non-Hindi-speaking regions can have any misgiving in this regard. All the regional languages and their interests have been fully safeguarded in our Constitution and full powers have been given to State Governments to do all that is possible to develop and encourage these languages with a view to using them to the maximum extent in the administrative and day-to-day work in the States.

The other question which arises is that of studying that language which representatives of the nation have decided should be used for certain specified all-India purposes in the national interest. I know that there are important regions in our country where Hindi is not the mother-tongue of the people. It is, therefore, possible that people of those regions may have some difficulty in learning this language. This difficulty has throughout been kept in view while formulating the programme for switching over to Hindi for specified purposes, as laid down in the Constitution. I am absolutely sure that whenever the language policy is reviewed or discussed in future also, the difficulties and feelings of our non-Hindi-speaking brethren will not be ignored. As our Prime Minister has said so often in the Lok Sabha and in his public utterances. Hindi will never be imposed on anyone. This position has been repeatedly clarified in the context of the recommendations of the Official Language Commission and the opinion expressed by the Parliamentary Committee and the decision taken by the Government on the basis of these recommendations. This stand has been once again reiterated in the Lok Sabha by our Home Minister only two days ago.

I urge my fellow countrymen from the non-Hindi-speaking regions to think what their duty is as members of a free and self-respecting nation. A step taken in the interest of national unity and its future integrity does not become improper merely because it might be easier to implement it for certain sections of our people. We have to consider this question from an all-India angle. Of course, if there is any apprehension that such a step might prove discriminatory against, or lead to difficulty for, a section of our people, such apprehension can and should be removed. I am convinced that our goodwill, our devotion and

our faith in the future of this country can overcome and language difficulty and all other such difficulties.

It will not perhaps be out of place if I talked about the Hindi language on this occasion. How Hindi—a direct descendant of the dialect spoken by wandering *sadhus* and *bhikshus*—evolved in its present form is for the philologists to say. But I should like to observe that the more I have tried to survey the history and evolution of the Hindi language, the more I have been convinced that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when Hindi was evolving from the dialect to the language stage, the contribution of South Indian against and *bhikshus* to its development was very prominent. Who does not know that the Rama and Krishna Bhakti Movements led by saints played a great part in the development of Hindi and that these Bhakti Movements spread from the south to the north ? It was Sri Ramanuja and later Swami Ramananda, a disciple of his line, who brought the Rama Bhakti Movement to Kashi. It was owing to their inspiration that the Bhakti Movement came to be propagated in the regional languages, besides Sanskrit. And, in this way, Awadhi, which was once a spoken language only came on the scene as a literary language. On the other hand, Braja Bhasha owes much to Vallabhacharya and his followers who inundated Mathura with the Krishna Bhakti cult. The Krishna Bhakti Movement has influenced deeply the Bengali language also. Thus, we see that the saints of South India have played a great role in the evolution of the Hindi language even though their main aim might have been to propagate the Bhakti Movement.

22

HINDI—THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

During the last forty or fifty years Hindi literature has made extra-ordinary progress. It has made rapid strides in the realms of philosophy, science and literature. I do not claim to be sufficiently acquainted with this ever-growing literature to be able to review its progress. I would be content to draw your attention to certain dangers that threaten the well-being of Hindi. I would also like to suggest certain directions in which the Hindi language and literature should shape their course.

The number of Hindi publications—books, newspapers and journals—has been steadily increasing and from the point of view of printing, get-up and lay-out, many of these publications are attractive. It appears to me that more than any other Indian language, Hindi is spoken by the largest number of people and, therefore, its publications command the widest sale and circulation. With the acceptance of Hindi as India's State language, if may be presumed that the number of Hindi books and journals well continue to increase.

As Hindi acquires a footing in non-Hindi-speaking States, its publications will be compared with those in the regional languages. Wether it is a daily newspaper with its racy style or a volume, sobre and solemn, it is bound to be compared with its counterpart in the regional language. In any language, great poetry or prose

*Speech at the presentation of the Abhinandan Granth at Arrah Nagri Pracharini Sabha on 3 March 1950.

are not created every day, for, greatness is an atribute of a natural inborn genius and not the result of painstaking labour. But besides genius, good writing needs other qualities which at least, can be acquired. They can be acquired through an effort and, therefore, no one need be discouraged by imagining that his language lacks the touch of genius. Perseverance and hard work would, to a large extent, make up for any deficinery, even if it exists. I would like all lovers of Hindi to realise their responsibility. While the Constituent Assembly was discussing the language question, several members from non-Hindi-speaking States had declared that they were accepting Hindi as the State language not because it was better developed than all the other languages of India, nor because its literature is richer than that of other Indian languages, but because Hindi is, compared to the other languges, spoken and understood by a large number of people. There were several members who were willing to accept Hindi as the State language and not as the national language. For them their own regional mother-tongue was the best of all languages; its literature was not the less rich and, therefore, as far as they were concerned, it might well be the national language. However, Hindi, only because it is the largest language group, was accepted as the language of the Centre. This constitutes a challlenge to the Hindi-speaking people who have now to prove that Hindi deserves the honour which the makers of our Constitution have given to it. Every Hindi writer, journalist, literature and publisher must fully understand this responsibility.

The first thing we need to do is to develop the vocabulary of Hindi as much possible. In the adoption of new words, we must not show any hesitation or narrow consideration. In Hindi we find not only Sanskrit words, but also words derived from foreign languages which have their origin in Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, English, Latin, French, Spanish and Dutch, etc. As a result of its contact with other languages, Hindi took a few words from them all; a sure sign of the dynamic nature of language. This has only added to the richness of Hindi and thus, instead of giving up this practice, we should absorb words of foreign origin by giving them an indigenous from. I do not believe that Hindi will benefit by refusing to us words of foreign origin which we have already assimilated in Hindi, nor do I think it to be wise to refuse to absorb such non-Hindi words as can be absorbed by the language.

I believe that once we have built up a large store of synonyms, very subtle distinctions would be born in their interpretation and when thought demands precision of expression, it would be possible to select the word which is the most accurate. The greater the process of selection, the greater the precision and the higher the evolution of language. I would like Hindi to absorb words from other languages, specially our own regional languages. In the countryside where Hindi is used, there is a wealth of beautiful and expressive words. We need not reject them as crude rural speech because there is no point in our refusal to retain words which have the merit of practice and tradition behind them.

Besides, there are several interesting, easy and meaningful idioms of which at least a few can be successfully taken over from one language by another, specially if the two languages have a common origin or have been in close contact with each other. I am sure that in the regional languages, there are many such idioms and usages which have either already been, or which can be accepted by Hindi. The utility of such borrowings would be established when there is closer contact between Hindi and the other languages.

Every language has its own style and rules of grammar, but, a closer association with another language does, inevitably, bring about changes in its structure. Though some changes are made consciously, it is usually difficult to explain the reason behind unconscious linguistic modifications. A close exchange between Hindi and the other languages would, therefore, make these changes appear natural and inevitable.

The vocabulary, idiom, style and grammer of a language cannot be altered arbitrarily by the dictates of an institution or an academy. No language, if it is a living organism, can grow or change its course under pressure of external direction; all change is the outcome of association. Therefore, a language should be allowed to evolve without any hindrance. Such a course is not only natural but also inevitable for Hindi which has now become our State language. If Hindi-speaking people are not liberal and imagine such changes to be again the purity and sanctity of their language, either our efforts would end in failure or the status of Hindi would be reduced to that of a regional language. At present, there is a spirit of healthy rivalry between Hindi and the

regional languages. Hindi will succeed in maintaining its position as the national language only if it is sufficiently liberal and elastic enough to accept and recognise the regional languages.

Everyone who knows Hindi should get acquainted with at least one regional Indian language, and thereby widen his contact with provinces other than his own. He should be able to place Hindi publications beside those in the other language and discover for himself, where Hindi fares well or need improvement. For those who wish to take to creative writing, knowledge of the regional languages is more or less compulsory, because without it their work will never have the universality which is essential for good literature. Knowing that in the interest of national unity, the non-Hindi-speaking people have accepted the self-imposed task of learning Hindi, cannot we, who know Hindi, take the trouble of at least acquainting ourselves with the thoughts expressed in the regional languages ?

There is another reason why we should acquire a knowledge of regional languages. Hindi has to be taught to the people of non-Hindi-speaking States, and in the beginning, a great part of the task would have to be conducted by the Hindi-speaking people. Unless they acquire at least a working knowledge of the regional language, they will find it difficult to teach Hindi. If, as laid down in our Constitution, Hindi has to replace English within the stipulated period of 15 years, those who know Hindi have the responsibility of learning other languages and thus, helping to accomplish this task.

In order to enrich Hindi literature and make it worthy of our State language, it is imperative that literature, original and enduring, should be created. I have not used the word literature in the restricted sense of the term, but in its wider and universal aspect by which I understand creative writing regardless of the subject matter. By this I mean one's original inquiry and research, whether pertaining to science, geography, meteorology, history, archaeology, mathematics, geometry, prose or poetry, which we ordinarily call literature; all these and other original works constitute our concept of literature. And so, when I refer to the enrichment of Hindi, I imply an enrichment of this nature. It is, therefore, necessary that those who know Hindi should train themselves to write original and independent treaties on these subjects. This task would require thousands of scholars and

research workers, who, forgetting all other considerations, would, with a singleness of aim, devote themselves to the task of presenting an original treatise on any one particular subject of research. It would call for great perseverance and if our young men attended to this work, we would, undoubtedly, see its results during the next fifteen years.

Besides original work, there is also great scope for translation; literature is created and published in the regional languages and important works whether they are old or new, should be translated into Hindi. The responsibility of translating not only from the regional languages but also from foreign languages, rests mainly on those who know Hindi. This is possible only when Hindi scholars know a foreign language to the extent of being able not only to enjoy the beauty of a great work themselves, but also, having the ability to transmute something of its beauty and power into their translation. Translation of more serious subjects requires special skill because the translator should not only know the two languages concerned, but also have a mastery over the subject which he wishes to translate. Therefore, merely a superficial knowledge of the two languages is not sufficient for a translation; it is essential that the translator should be well acquainted, not only with the subject matter, but also, the material that is available in his own language, Hindi.

However, I am afraid that an increased Hindi readership would mean an increase in the number of publications some of which are cheap and vulgar literature. Hindi writers and publishers should guard against this tendency and dissociate themselves from it. It is not easy to resist the temptation of easy money but I believe that if the leading Hindi literateurs and critics turn their attention to this question, they will be able to put a stop to the production of cheap literature.

There are about five million aboriginals living in Bihar. It is necessary to know more about their way of life and their language in order to establish a closer contact with them, not with the aim of exploiting them but of serving them. They may be backward people but there is a great deal that we could learn from them. Therefore, in order to work for their welfare and learn from them the lessons of honesty, simplicity and tribal unity, we must not only learn their languages but teach them Hindi so that they may also participate in the service of the nation.

23

LANGUAGE, RELIGION AND SCARCITY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

A Northern Indian, when he comes to South India, is faced with the problem of language. Unfortunately, I do not know your language and I have perforce to speak in English which I personally do not like. Hindi has now been adopted by the Constituent Assembly, and it is enacted in the Constitution itself that Hindi is the national language of India. We all hope that within the next fifteen years, everyone in this country having any all-India business will know enough of Hindi to be able to carry on his work and the language itself will be so developed as to become an easy medium of expression.

We have had this problem for a number of years. About thirty-five years ago. Mahatma Gandhi, realising the importance of a national language, directed his attention to the propagation of Hindi in the South. In the North, all the languages are more or less derived from one origin and are allied languages. Therefore, it is not so very difficult for a Hindi-speaking person to understand, for example, Bengali or for a Bengali-speaking person to understand Hindi. But, there is real difference between the languages of the North and the languages of the South, although here too Sanskrit has played a great part and many words are intelligible because they are derived from Sanskrit. The other day, I was listening to some verses which were being recited at

*Speech at public meeting at Herbert Grounds, Ernakulam, on March 29, 1951.

one of the meetings. I could understand at least half of the words and I felt that except for the verbal terminations and such like things, the rest was all derived from Sanskrit. That is the great part which Sanskrit has played and when the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the language for all-India purposes, it also laid down that we shall have ordinarily to depend upon Sanskrit for expresssing all new ideas for which we do have words in current Hindi. That is a common factor. With its help, I hope it will be possible not only for a person like me to speak to you in Hindi which will be intelligible to you, but it will be possible for you also to speak in that language so as to be understood by me.

There is no question of imposing the language of the North on the South. As a matter of fact, it is the will of all our people that we should have one common language. We have always felt that no nation can express its soul unless it speaks through its own language. During the struggle for freedom, someone said that it was impossible to win freedom through the English language. I believe, it is equally necessary for us to realise that it is not possible for us to maintain our freedom through another language. Therefore, whenever I have to address any meeting in the English language, I feel that I am doing something which is rather awkward for me. During the last thirty years or more, I have always spoken at scores of meetings in my own language. I have in a sense lost the art of speaking in English, if I had at all possessed it at any time, Still, when I come to these parts, I have to speak in the English language. I can only hope that all those who do not understand what I am talking now, will excuse me for my inability. They will get, in due course, a translation of my speech through the newspapers which I am told are very well represented at this meeting.

This is by way of introduction, but there is also a very important element of urgency in it and I am anxious that in all our work we should give great importance to the cultivation of a common language for India. The Government will undoubtedly do whatever is necessary in this connection, However, here more than anywhere else, it is necessary that people should try to achieve the purpose through their own independent effort. It has been my privilege, during the last thirty years and more, to be associated with the work of the Hindi Prachar Sabha in the

South and it has given me immense pleasure to attend meetings for distributing prizes and certificates. Apart from that, what has amazed me and pleased me equally is that I have seen and given prizes to three generations at one and the same time—father, son and grandson, all learning the Hindi language and getting proficiency certificates. The younger the age, the greater have I found the proficiency. It is really a matter for congratulation that you in the South have taken to this work so seriously and I have reason to hope that this problem will be solved. By the end of the 15 years which the Constitution has given to us we shall be in a position to conduct all our business through the medium of our own language.

We have a number of problems, but some of them are of a basic nature and which underlie all others. One such problem is that of communal harmony in this country. We have got many religions of communities. Unfortunately, sometimes communal harmony gets disturbed for one reason or another. There would we nothing very peculiar about if it quarrels occur only occasionally, because quarrels do occur even among brothers, husband and wife, and father and son. All such quarrels are soon made up and affection does not suffer. Similarly, even if one community occasionally finds some cause for quarrel with another, that should not lead them to make this quarrel a source of perpetual irritation or to give it anything but a temporary character. Fortunately, your region has a singular history of toleration and I am told that Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews have all been living peacefully for centuries. Even a casual visitor like me, while passing along the roads, can see temples, churches and synagogues side by side and one can understand that this was possible only because there has been tolerance and regard for all the religions.

My belief is—and it is the opinion of all true followers of all religions—that true religion is concerned with belief in a supernatural power. Since that supernatural power is above all and all others are like her children, all human beings must be, more or less, like brothers and sisters to one another. If that is the teaching of all religions, then, in spite of differences in the way in which we worship God, there is no reason why we should not really be brothers. Here in India, our ancestors—the Rishis, of old—realised this and laid down once and for all that the truth is

one but the wise reach it by different paths. We want a realisation of this truth not only as a matter of intellectual conviction, but also as a rule of conduct to be followed every moment of our lives. It is impossible for us to rise to any height without a realisation of this truth. If we quarrel amongst ourselves, it is obvious that we cannot make any progress. All the effort that is wasted in suppressing one another can very well be utilised in promoting our common prosperity. This one of the fundamental problems which this country has been tackling from time immemorial, but its urgency need to be re-emphasised today when we have freed ourselves from foreign domination and are left to our own resources to shape our destinies.

Another fundamental question which naturally affects all of us is that of our economic set-up. We here, in this country, vast masses of humanity, some of them in extremely poor circumstances, not having enough food, clothing, and shelter. There must be millions and millions of men and women who are in such a condition in this country. On the other hand, we have only a few persons who are in affluent and happy circumstances. What we need is not the suppression of those at the top but the uplifting of those who are at the bottom and I cannot understand the philosophy which aims at levelling down instead of levelling up. What is needed is really the raising of the general standard of living. Sometimes jealousies are roused when a poor man sees his neighbour in happy and affluent circumstances. That is a natural instinct and we have to tolerate it, but we must be prepared to explain that they will be happier if both rose higher still and no attempt was made to pull down the affluent and happy. After all, our per capita income is very low as compared to many other countries of the world. Unless the per capita income is increased, we cannot hope to rise the standard of living of all the people. We may to some extent be able to raise the standard of a few, but if all the present wealth the distributed equally, it would only mean a distribution of poverty. If we had enough wealth to go round and make everybody affluent, an attempt at redistribution would be understandable. Unfortunately, we are not so well off. I am, therefore, anxious that everyone in this country should realise that the primary duty is to increase the distributable fund. What is needed, therefore, is increased production of everthing.

You know how we are suffering on account of food scarcity. We are trying, by means of controls and rationing, to distribute equally whatever food is available. A few people try to purchase a little more than others in the black-market. That is bound to occur when there is not enough to go round. I have always appealed to our people to increase our food production. Production can be increased considerably, without much effort, if we paid a little attention to it. I was telling another audience this morning that it has been calculated that our food deficiency is only about 10 per cent or so. I do not think it is at all a difficult proposition to produce say 11 maunds where they are producing 10 maunds today. If we did that, we would be able to get as much as we are getting today without going to foreign countries for our food purchases.

Similarly, we have experienced scarcity of cloth. Here also, it is the same problem. When there is not enough to go round, the only effect of control would be to give a smaller quantity of cloth to each individual. Of course, there may be defects in administration leading to a certain amount of corruption or black-marketing. All that you can expect, under the circumstances, is a smaller quantity for each and plenty for none. Therefore, what the country needs today is an effort by everybody for increased production of everything that we require.

We have attained *Swaraj* and for the last three years or more we have been running our administration according to our own desires and our own ideas. But, I have a feeling that all of us have not realised fully the effect and the importance and significance of independence. One effect must be a kind of elation in the mind of everyone which should express itself in a determined effort to make our lives better in every way. Somehow or the other, we do not find that. There seems to be a kind of feeling prevalent in many places and among many people that it is for the Government to do everything and the people have simply to sit with folded hands. I did not think that the right attitude to adopt. After all, the Government is nothing but a representative of the people, especially is in a democracy. If it is truly representative, it must represent not only the good points but also the weakness of the people. If the weaknesses predominate in the people, they cannot but be reflected in the Government also. If we find that our representatives are not

always up to the mark, let us think over the question coolly and see if the weakness are not the same that each one of us ourselves possess. It is very easy to throw the blame on others. But, that is really no solution. We must turn the searchlight inwards and see to what extent we ourselves have contributed to anything that has gone wrong. If we are honest we would find that the contribution of each one of us has not been negligible. Once that realisation comes and once we feel that we have to set the house in order, we shall start doing it ourselves. There is a saying in Northern India that before going to light the lamp in the temple, you must light the lamp in your house itself. So, we must first of all light the lamp within ourselves. Simply thinking of lighting the lamp in the temple, neglecting our own selves, would result in that light also being dim.

We have not as yet fully realised the value of our freedom and are still in that frame of mind when we used to blame the Government for everything and did not search for defects in ourselves. That was perhaps a stage in our political evolution which was unavoidable. But, now that we have attained freedom, we must give up that habit and must feel that it is our own responsibility. The individual is, after all, the foundation of society. Society is nothing but a conglomeration of individuals. Unless each brick in the house is well-laid and is strong, you can never hope the building as a whole to be strong. We have, therefore, to improve the individual. There it is that we find a fundamental difference between two ideologies. There are people who think that it is the group which can keep the individual in order. My own feeling is that the group cannot be very different from the individual and any attempt on the part of the group to keep the individual in order is bound to fail. Certainly the group cannot be of a higher order than the individual. Who in the group is to lay down the rule, who in the group is to point out to the individual what is wrong ? There is bound to be conflict, conflict of a perpetual nature. The only way to end conflict is to improve the individual. That is one of the fundamental differences between Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on one side which laid emphasis on the improvement of the individual and all those other teaching in which more emphasis is laid on society. I hope that in this part of the country where education has spread to such an

extent, you will see the difference between the two. After all, society cannot be composed of anything else but individuals and it can have neither the rules of conduct nor morality nor ideals which are different from those of the individuals. It cannot enforce something from above on the individual. It has to get its ideologies evolved after individuals. Let us, therefore, try to improve each individual in this country and through each individual to build up an ideal State from every point of view.

Mahatmaji laid stress on non-violence. It is on non-violence alone that an ordered society can be based. There is no use creating violence in the hope that by violence we shall be able to suppress violence. We have a saying in the North that you cannot wash mud with mud. For washing mud, you need pure water. For getting rid of violence, you require something much better than violence, You require non-violence and that is Mahatma Gandhi's teaching. He saw instinctively that in a country like India where we have so many religions and so many languages, unless non-violence is a basic factor in every-day life, there will be no end to our quarrels or problems. That is true not only of us, but it is true of the whole world. India is a sort of microcosm which represents the microcosm if the world at large. I have, therefore, emphsised, wherever it has been possible for me to do so, the importance of non-violence in our every-day life, in our dealings with one another and also in our dealings with other countries. There are, no doubt, circumstances which sometimes force our hands to do something against our better judgment. One can understand that and one may be prepared even to excuse such cases. But, if we knowingly devate from the path, then it becomes a disease. What we need is a genuine effort to shape our own lives through non-violence. If in spite of that there are deviations, it does not matter because we shall be able, ultimately, to come to the right course. As night follows day, the difficulties which are facing us today will disappear if we fully realise that. If we once realise the full truth, there is no problem which cannot be solved. Therefore, it is essential that we must pay due regard to what Gandhiji said, we must not rest content with uttering his name only, but should gladly follow the path which he laid out for us. I desire to impress upon you, friends,

that we cannot do better than walk in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. There must be a genuine effort to follow that path. Once that is done, the rest becomes easy.

I hope I have not tried you too much and I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

24

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I thank you for the honour that you have done me today and I shall always value it highly, coming as it does from this University, which was not only the first to make one of our spoken languages the medium of instruction, but which had also done pioneering work in getting text-books in that language on all scientific and non-scientific subjects prepared and published. In its own way and within the limitations of the language chosen as the medium of instruction, that work appeared to me to be quite encouraging as I was and have always been keenly interested in this question ever since I began taking active part in public affairs. I am glad to say that today public consciousness has been thoroughly aroused on this subject and it is generally recognised by the intelligentsia and the educationists that, if there is to be no avoidable and unnecessary waste in our educational effort, it is absolutely necessary that education should be imparted in the indigenous tongues. But with all this there is yet some haziness among certain sections of the people about the language policy best calculated to serve the objectives we have in view.

I would like, with your permission, to say a few words about it. I believe that everyone in this country know—in any case I would like everybody to know—that under the Constitution that the Sovereign People of India have adopted through their Constituent Assembly, it is our duty to establish a democratic society in

*Speech at the Special Convocation of the Osmania University, Hyderabad (Deccan), on August 30, 1951.

this country—a society in which every individual and every group would have the fullest possible rights and opportunities to realise all his, her or its potentialities. They would also have equal opportunities with others to shape the policy of the Government in the States and the Union. While thinking of the policy to be adopted with regard to the medium of instruction we must all keep in our mind this mandatory obligation. I need not say that education is a power by itself and that in any case a person bereft of it cannot have any chance of either realising himself to the full or making any effective or worthwhile impression on the policies and actions of the government of his country and region. It is, therefore, plain that the methods and means of education should be such as do not permit any discrimination between one man and another and between one group and another.

It would. thus, appear that all kinds of education, primary, secondary and university, should be available in its own tongue, to every linguistic group of any appreciable size. It is only then that it would not have to spend more time, money and energy than any other group for acquiring the benefits of education. Any other course of action would put one group at a disadvantage in comparison to the group in whose language its children have to acquire education. This means that education at all stages must be in the language of the region concerned.

I would like to emphasize, however, that this can be feasible only if the linguistic group is of an appreciable size and forms a compact region. It cannot be reasonably demanded by those who are very small in numbers or are scattered in different parts of other linguistic regions. The governments of those linguistic regions must make arrangements for the imparting of education to their children in their own mother-tongue except in the lowest stages. The financial and other implications of accepting such a demand can be easily perceived. In every well-defined linguistic region of India, small numbers of persons speaking other languages are to be found. If separate arrangements have to be made in each school, in each college, and in each university of that region for the teaching of the children of all these different linguistic groups, the cost would be colossal. Moreover, from the political point of view, it is desirable that such scattered remnants of any linguistic group, in any other linguistic region, should identify, themselves, with the latter group instead of remaining entirely distinct from the latter and thus keeping up a difference

which may bring about ill-feeling and misunderstanding between them and the large bulk of the population around them. Much of the complexity of the language question in this country would have been solved if each linguistic group recognised this cold logic of facts—financial and political.

Each regional language has to be developed and its literature enriched so as to enable it to become a fit vehicle and rich store-house of knowledge of all kinds—ancient and modern. It is the duty of the regional government or governments to help and encourage this development. This can be best done by building upon the foundation of the existing form and vocabulary of the language and by embellishing it with whatever can be naturally and easily adopted and adapted from other sister languages. Any puristic attempt to exclude words, idioms, and even grammatical construction on the ground that they were borrowed and did not originally belong to the source from which the language was derived, is bound not only to fail but to result in impoverishing the language instead of enriching it. Besides, we have to conserve our energy to the utmost for devoting it to the urgent task of abolishing poverty and ignorance from our coutry and can hardly spare any for a wholly unnecessary, if not mischievous purpose like this. I do not see any justification for linguistic purism, for language after all, is but a medium of communication and if a word symbols well-understood by the people there is no reason why it should be thrown out on the simple ground of its alien origin. Also, the growth of the language should be in a direction in which it becomes more and more acceptable and intelligible to the vast masses of the linguistic region concerned. In themes, its style, its vocabulary should be as near as possible to the life and the tongue of the common people.

Apart from the urgent need of developing and enriching the regional language, there is another question which also demands careful consideration. Ours is a multi-lingual country. We must have a common language that would enable the different linguistic regions to communicate with one another in matters of inter-regional and national life. After full consideration, the Constituent Assembly provided in the Constitution that this language shall be Hindi in the Devanagri script, the term of numerals for official purposes of the Union being the internationalism of Indian numerals. It was an unanimous agreement and one armed at after due

accommodation of all the relevant interests. I think that there is no reason whatever why anyone in this country should feel that his or his group's interests would be adversely affected by this decision in any way. I do not think that I need say more than that within the educational system of each linguistic region, there should be arrangement for the teaching of the Union language. It is necessary to emphasise this so that those speaking other languages than Hindi may not find themselves at a disadvantage in any respect whatsoever. How and at what stage, instruction in Hindi can be fitted in with the general scheme of education in non-Hindi regions, has to be worked out without delay and steps taken to implement any plan that may be adopted so that, within the time allowed by the Constitution, we may be able to do without the English language for official purposes of the Union. This State has three languages spoken by the people in regions which are more or less marked. It had been making every earnest efforts to develop Urdu, which I consider to be only another style or form of what has been adopted by our Constitution as the language of the Union, though it has its own script and distinctive vocabulary, it has thus the same problem that our multi-lingual country as a whole has to solve. But, this state has had the advantage of having made leadway with a language for public purposes which is distinct from the three regional languages. We should conserve and derive what benefit and lessons we can from the experience so gained and I feel that, it may prove of great value as giving us a foundation on which to build. It is the duty and privilege of this University to erect on that foundation an edifice which will redound to its credit and to the great benefit of our land.

I thank you once again for your courtesy and kindness in conferring on me the honorary degree and I wish University ever increasing success and prosperity.

25

TOWARDS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

In my wanderings, I have seen most parts of the country more than once. I notice tendencies in all directions which indicate that we have not completely understood our obligations to the country. In many places the feeling of regionalism gets the better of every other feeling. In other places the feeling of casteism gets the better of other kinds of feelings. Provincial feelings sometimes take us off our feet. And linguism is another subject which makes us wild.

While we have the various States with their pecularities, with their specialities and with their own personalities, we have the Indian nation as a whole which comprises all the States and all the personalities of the States. Our Constitution provides for the fullest development of each State in its own way, according to its own personality, and it also provides that they will all work together so that the country as a whole grows and prospers. Therefore, every State has a two-fold responsibility—its responsibility to the Central Government, and its responsibility equally to its own minorities, to its own groups. A State can prosper only if it realises its responsibilities in both these respects fully. The responsibilities of the State to itself include the way it treats the minorities within it. There are places where caste plays havoc, and the provisions of the Constitution which are intended for the service of all are sometimes used for the purpose of groups.

*Address at a public meeting held at Marina Beach, Madras, 15 August 1960.

These may either be religious groups or caste groups or they may be linguistic groups. Undoubtedly, it is necessary that the language of the State, that is to say, of the majority of the people, must have its due place in the administration of the State and in matters educational, but it is equally necessary that those who constitute a minority within the State, the linguistic minority, should feel quite safe within the State.

We have had some very unfortunate happenings recently. I do not know the facts fully to be able to say with certainty, but perhaps very largely at the bottom of these happenings were linguistic considerations of a narrow type. These might have been also some grievances about the services. We have, therefore, always to be careful that none of these things should give cause for trouble to anyone. Our Constitution as well as our administrative orders have guaranteed even to small minorities the protection of language, so that their children may be educated, at any rate in the primary stages, in their own mother-tongue. Similarly, in the services also, care has to be taken that every one gets his full share. But in this connection we must remember that after all Government service is not the only source of employment. With the development of our industries, there will be progressively less dependence on Government service. Until that stage is reached, it has to be seen that no one has a grievance because he belongs to a minority group, and certainly no one should have a grievance regarding admission to institutions because he belongs to a minority group.

So much about the duty of a State to its own citizens. But the State has its duty to the Centre also. About that we have provisions in the Constitution laying down the duties as well as the rights and responsibilities of the States and the Centre.

As the question of language has been agitating the minds of many people, I should like to refer to it in some detail. Even while we were engaged in the struggle for freedom, Mahatma Gandhi realised that we would have to solve the problem of the language of the country. We have so many languages which are spoken in different parts of the country; and because we felt that each language deserves to be developed to the fullest extent, in the very first session of the Congress over which we had control we got the Constitution of the Congress amended. It was in the Congress of December 1920 at Nagpur that linguistic provinces

were created for the Congress. And even in States which had more than one language, there were several Congress provinces. Those of you who are old enough to remember these events will know that even in the State you had the Tamil language, you had the Telugu language, you had also in parts of it the Malayalam language, and the also the Kannada language. Administratively there was one province, but the Congress had several provinces within it. Similarly in Bombay, we had not only Marathi and Gujarati but we had also Kannada; and the Congress had several provinces within that State as well.

So the idea of linguistic provinces is not a fad of the present Government. The idea of linguistic provinces was given by Mahatma Gandhi and it was only fulfilled by the present Government by legislation. The idea behind the linguistic provinces is to enable the languages of the various provinces to develop to the fullest extent. The Constitution has provided for it and we want each province to develop its own language to the fullest extent possible. Even our seats of learning which are very conservative in this respect are now gradually coming to recognise the place of the Indian languages in their curricula. Many of them have already adopted partially the State languages as media of instruction in their respective areas, and although it cannot be said today that all the universities have adopted the regional languages as the media of instruction up to the highest standard, the day is not far when they will have to do so.

Not only in education, but also in administration, the provincial languages have to find their place : and while at the lowest levels of the administration the provincial languages have always been used, they are now being used largely in the higher rungs also. One day they will be used exclusively in all administrative matters within each State. This was exactly what Mahatma Gandhi intended.

But Gandhiji also thought of a language for the whole country, and naturally he thought of Hindi. I say naturally because he saw that it was spoken by a very large number of people, large than those speaking any other language. When people talk of Hindi imperialism, I sometimes wonder what they mean. The idea of introducing Hindi as an all-India language has not emanated from any Hindi speaking person. Two persons in northern India have been responsible for the spread of Hindi as

an all-India language. Hindi was not the language of either of them. In the seventies of the last century, Swami Dayanand realised that if he wanted to spread his own form of Hinduism, he must resort to Hindi. He did not come from a Hindi-speaking province. He came from Kathiawar. And some fifty years later Mahatma Gandhi took up the same work. He also did not belong to a Hindi-speaking province. Although in the later days of his life be spoke Hindi fluently and addressed large meetings in Hindi, I remember the days when he faltered and was unable to talk fluently in Hindi. Even in South Africa, he had conceived the idea that Hindi alone could be the language for the whole of India for communication with one another. Even there he had been addressing people, including Tamilians, in his own broken Hindi. And when he came to Champaran in 1917; he was able to speak just a few words. But he was above all a practical person. He, therefore, told us that he would not insist upon his Hindi but would talk to us in English and listen to our English; and much of the work that we did there was conducted through the medium of English. That was because he regarded work as more important and, therefore, he had to resort to English. Not that he had given up the idea of having Hindi as an all-India language for all-India purposes. Even from there he sent his son and Swami Satyadev to Madras to spread Hindi; and the foundations of the Hindi Prachar Sabha were laid then, not by a Hindi-speaking man but by Mahatma Gandhi and his son.

You have, therefore, no reason to think that it is the Hindi-speaking people who are trying to impose any language on you. We are as practical as, I hope, Mahatma Gandhi. And just as he agreed to conduct work in English because he considered work important, we are conducting our work in English even now. And it has been authoritatively stated that we shall continue to do that so long as you wish us to do it. But may I put one thing to you ? You expect us to respect your feelings, and we do. We do not want to impose anything on you. Not even an Indian language. Therefore, please do not wish to impose on us a foreign language. We are respecting the feelings of others also, and we are determined not to impose Hindi on you. I hope you will also relax and not impose English on us.

So far as education is concerned, I think Hindi is also spreading very fast in these parts. I believe more people have learnt

Hindi in these parts than English. Hindi Prachar has served at least 70 lakhs of men and women in these parts. Some 15 lakhs have appeared at its examinations. I do not know how many people have passed the English examinations. I do not wish to embarrass you by asking how many of you know English and how many of you know Hindi.

I wish the people of the north also realised their responsibilities in these matters. I have a feeling that if they had left the question of Hindi to be solved by the people of southern India, we would have made greater progress by now. The way in which Hindi has been adopted and accepted as a matter of study has encouraged in the hope that you will adopt Hindi for the purposes also, and I want the people of the north to realise that they cannot do anything only according to their wishes without consulting and without acquiring the consent of the people in the south. After all, it is one of the fundamentals of the Constitution that the wishes of the minority must be respected. But it is not only for administrative purposes that we want Hindi or other Indian languages to be studied. It is necessary that the different parts of the country should understand each other much better than they do today; and the way to the hearts of the people is through their language. I am a Hindi-speaking man, but I had the good fortune of receiving my education of Bangal, in Calcutta, and I picked up a little Bengali then. Some years ago when I was invited to Calcutta to deliver the convocation address, I spoke in my own broken Bengali. I do not imagine there was anything very valuable in what I said. But it had one great advantage—it reached the hearts of the Bengalis.

I want the people of the north to study the languages of the south. It is not possible for everyone to learn many languages. But it is possible to translate from one language to another, and that can be done only if people study languages. More than that, it is necessary that people should travel through the country, and I do not want them to travel and talk in English. Well, so long as you cannot talk in Hindi, you had better talk in your own language when you come to us and it should be our look-out to get translators to interpret you to our general public. Although I could have found many persons from amongst you who could have translated my speech into Tamil if I had spoken in Hindi, I have

not done so. That is out of respect for you. I was really afraid that you might charge me with imperialism if I did so. All our lives we have fought imperialism. Please do not imagine that at the fag end of my life I would be guilty of imperialism of any kind.

I am afraid I have strayed from the subject I wanted to discuss. The real point is that we want unity in the country. Provincial feeling, caste feeling and linguistic feeling should all be made subservient to the feeling for the country, and I am quite sure that the feeling of patriotism will dictate to you the adoption of Hindi in due course. I can tell my north Indian friends that when you take to Hindi, they must bewere that they will be defeated in examinations. You have defeated the Englishman in English, and I have no doubt you will defeat the Hindi-speaking man also in Hindi. Therefore, no one who wants to enter Service at tbe Centre need be afraid. But so long as that tear subsists, however, unfounded it may be, we have to respect it.

26

THE TAMIL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

You are rightly proud of your language and culture. You have maintained it in this part of the country as well as outside wherever your people have gone. It is in the fitness of things that you should be thinking of making your contribution to the general culture of the country as a whole. The culture of India is a composite culture which in drawn from the different parts of the country. In the course of thousands of years, we have been able to evolve, in the midst of all the diversities that we see, a general unanimity and unity of culture. This is one great thing which we always cherish.

There has never been an attempt in this country to force anything on others within the country or outside. There is no record of any invasion by the people of India of any other country. Within the country itself, every group and every part of it has been allowed the fullest freedom to develop itself as best it could. The result has been a number of very highly developed languages with rich literatures containing many gems of great value.

At this time, when we are going to reconstruct India, you should be ready and prepared to take full part in the work of reconstruction. It is necessary that the various languages that are spoken and that have a literature of their own, should develop to the greatest possible extent. It is, indeed, necessary that all the languages should develop, because without them we cannot have the India which we wish to build. At the same time, we need a

*Speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the Thirukkural Research Institute, Madras, April 7, 1951.

language which will enable us, from the north to the south, from the east to the west, to correspond with one another and understand one another. In the past, we used Sanskrit for this purpose. We require some language for this limited purpose only. It will help us feel, in spite of divergences, that we are all one.

I have no doubt that in your efforts for the growth and enrichment of the Tamil language and literature, you will get the support of all right-thinking people in the country at large. Just as you are giving us political and social workers and administrators, we want you to give us also literary persons who will inspire not only those people who can speak and understand the Tamil language, but also those who do not understand that language but still wish to profit by its wealth. That can be done by translations of the best works, although it is a big task. I am glad that the Government as well as non-official organisations are bringing about such a fusion as we desire.

In modern times, research work in regard to a great literary work puts more emphasis on things like the author's place of birth and the construction of his sentences or expressions in relation to the set rules of grammar. The result is that more attention is given to the man than to the work. After all, it is not the man that matters so much as the work he left behind. We, in northern India, are no worse off because we do not know the exact place of birth of Tulsidas. What I would like your research workers to do is to help in the propagation of the real teachings of a great work like the Kural. I have no doubt that scholars will bring together the different versions and editions and all the commentaries on the great author. We do not know the dates and places of activity of many of our great men of the past : still, their life has become part of the lives of millions in this country. The Kural has been a part of the lives of millions and millions of people for centuries in spite of the fact that little is known about the life of the author.

27

A CASE FOR ONE SCRIPT*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I must begin with a word of apology for not being able to address you in Telugu. Our decision to learn as many languages of this country as possible has come at a stage in my life when I am too old to learn any new language. I must also apologise for not addressing you in Hindi because I understand there are many persons in this audience who would not be able to follow Hindi. I have, therefore, no option but to speak in a foreign language. But I believe and hope that the time will soon come when it will not be necessary for any Indian to use a foreign language in addressing another Indian. That was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi when he started Hindi *prachar* in the southern part of the country. When the time came for drawing up a Constitution for the country it was realised that we would not continue to carry on our functions in a foreign language for any length of time. It was for this reason that the Constitution-makers adopted Hindi as the language for all-India purposes. At the same time it was left and laid down in the Constitution that the provincial languages should also be encouraged and given all facilities for rising to their full stature in all walks of life. For that reason a national literary academy was instituted by the Government of India. The object of the academy is not to develop any language in any particular State but to develop all languages and bring them all together on a

*Speech while inaugurating the Andhra Sahitya Academy, Hyderabad, August 7, 1957.

common platform so that they can exchange their best. The translation of classics of all the languages of the country as well as of foreign languages into Indian languages is encouraged, It is proposed to award prizes to the best authors of each language. The Sahitya Akademi, an all-India body, was established three years ago and academies have since been established in some of the States for the different languages. You have had good reason for not starting an academy earlier because you were waiting for the realisation of your cherished dream of Vishal Andhra.

This is an appropriate occasion for me to point out that it has never been the intention of anyone to force Hindi on any part of India. What is wanted is that we should express ourselves to one another in an Indian language, particularly in all-India matters, whether they are political and administrative matters or matters of trade and commerce. In a vast country like India were we have so many languages, the language understood by the largest number of people has to be adopted as the national language. It was mere coincidence that Hindi happened to be the language spoken and understood by the largest number of people in the country and it was for this reason that it was adopted as the official language. No reason other than numbers induced the framers of the Constitution to adopt Hindi as the language of the country. Although there are people in some parts of the country who still feel that Hindi is being forced on them. I also know from my personal experience that you are not among them. Even 20 years ago, when I toured this part of the country as the President of the Congress and to address large numbers of meetings, I remember that in most of the places people wanted me to speak in Hindi rather than in English. The reason was also clear.

The majority of the audience understood neither Hindi nor English and they had to wait for a translation of my speech. The number of those who could understand English was probably the same as the number of those who could understand Hindi. So if they had to wait for a translation, it did not matter whether I spoke in Hindi or English. But Hindi being a national language. they preferred Hindi. It was then that I first realised your attachment to Hindi which was later on adopted as the national language and your great enthusiasm for making your contribution to national causes. Ever since then I have retained that high opinion about you.

It is not surprising that in a vast country like India we have so many languages. Europe, too, has many languages, some of which are spoken by a much smaller number of people than those who speak any of the Indian languages. Even so, Europe has preserved these languages. It was the wisdom and farsightedness of our ancestors that in spite of differences of languages, they kept the country one; they devised measures which united us and in spite of all kinds of difficulties and calamities which no other nation could have survived, we have survived and are still living together as one country and one nation. Now that we have attained political freedom also, it is incumbent upon us to behave and carry on our affairs in such a way that the independence which we have won may last for ever and ever, and every section of the vast community, irrespective of the language it speaks, its customs and modes of living, should have all facilities and opportunities to develop to the maximum possible extent.

I was thinking how we could help this unification still further. I have had some experience in this which I wish to share with you. Many years ago there used to be a publication, *Devanagar*, which was run by a judge of the Calcutta High Court named Sharada Charan. *Devanagar* carried articles in different languages of India but in the Devanagari script. We found that we could understand a great deal of the other languages through the devanagari script. I have ever since felt that it is possible for the provincial languages to be better known and understood if we could render them in one script. Fortunately, the alphabet of all Indian languages except Tamil, is the same. That is the case not only in India but outside India also. For example, Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand have the same alphabet as ourselves. The script is different but the sounds are the same. We have this advantage. If we could adopt one script which is acceptable to all, it would be easier for the people of one language to understand people speaking other languages. It will be a great day when we have brought this about.

The journal to which I have referred existed some forty years ago. Four or five years ago, when the members of new Parliament met me, I suggested to them that they revive the publication of the journal. They accepted my suggestion, and *Devanagar* has been restarted. What Shri Sharada Charan's *Devanagar* used to do was to publish articles in different languages together but in the Devanagari script. But in the present *Devanagar*, articles in

different languages are given along with their translations. Hindi articles are translated in Tamil, Tamil articles in Telugu, Telgue in Gujarati, Bengali in Marathi and so forth, but all are reproduced in the Devanagari script. I am placing this idea before this gathering of learned people as worthy of consideration In my view we would be able to enrich our various literatures further if it were not for the difficulty of script. The Devanagari script is being mentioned because Sanskrit has always been written in the Devanagari script and it is already known all over the country. But I am not particular about it. You may adopt any other script which might be feasible. What I want as that we should adopt one script for the whole country so that, as I have said earlier, it may become easy for people speaking one language to read another language. I am making this suggestion as an individual interested in the unity of the country. It has no authority behind it.

28

STATE LANGUAGE OF INDIA—A CLARIFICATION

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Shri K.G. Mashruwala has asked me to clarify two points arising out of my articles recently published in *Harijan.* He writes : "On the question of the language of High Courts and the medium of instruction in Universities, do I understand you correctly that you are of the opinion that it should be the common language of India in both the cases, and not the provincial language ?"

Subject to change of opinion on further consideration, my present feeling is as follows.

The number of judgments to be appealed against before the Supreme Court, or deserving of being reported in Law Reports, is generally very small. In the first case it would not be very difficult to have the necessary records—including judgments of the High Court—translated into the common language. Even otherwise a good many original documents and records of proceedings of lower courts would have to be translated as at present. Translation into the common language is much easier than into English.

With regard to Law Reports, it could be arranged, I feel, to have report-worthy judgments authoritatively translated into the common language if they are not so already. They will be very few out of the several delivered from day to day. To avoid possible mistakes in translation, either the original judgments might also be reported, or there might be a double series, one in the provincial language and the other in the common language.

IN THE HIGH COURTS

But this does not mean that the provincial language alone should prevail in the High Courts. Both in the High Courts and Universities both the common and the provincial language should prevail equally. All students and professors in universities, and legal practitioners and judges in courts, who speak the provincial language, must be permitted to use that language. But with regard to those coming from other provinces, while they should be expected to understand and follow the provincial language, they should be at liberty to express themselves in the common language.

As students and others belonging to the province will be expected to have a good and sound knowledge of the common language (indeed, much superior to what they have of English today) they should not have any difficulty in following it. This would enable universities and the judiciary to draw upon the talents of other provinces.

All-India academics, in whatever province located, should, of course, use the common language. Time will decide whether the common and the provincial languages run a parallel course abreast or one gains precedence over the other in some parts, while the contrary is the case in other. In any case the common language will not be neglected.

This should solve the legislative problem also. Even if all legislation throughout the Union is originally passed in the common language, its translation into the local language will be necessary for the information of the public. While university students, lawyers and others might be expected to have a good command over the common language, the same cannot be said of all legislator. Their convenience demands that legislation should be originally in the provincial language in the provincial legislatures. But every province should also publish its common language translation and in the case of multi-linguistic provinces or for those legislators who prefer to speak in the common language there should be no obstacle to doing so.

In any case translations are unavoidable. Either you have to translate for the public, or for extra-pravincial purposes. It would help the development of the provincial languages side by side with the common language if the original work is in the

language of the province.

I think I have sufficiently indicated in the first article that the study of the common language will have to be intensified. I envisage a time when every person in India claiming to be educated will know at least two languages, namely, the common language and the language of his own region. In a vast country like India this is the only possible solution if any kind of uniformity has to be maintained or rather if the country has not to be broken up into more or less independent units each having a language of its own which will be different from that of other regions.

INTENSIVE STUDY COURSES

It will, therefore, be necessary to intensify the study of the common language throuhout the country. It may not be necessary for the universities all over the country to make the common language the medium of instruction but there is no doubt that a great many of their students will have to study the common language diligently if they hope to serve the country and keep themselves in touch with things of common interest all the country over. Lawyers, judicial officers, members of legislatures and teachers in superior grades must know the common language if they hope to be able to discharge their duties satisfactorily.

As I have said, we cannot have research journals in about a dozen languages. Apart from the cost involved, the utility of such journals will be greatly diminished, if not destroyed, even for this country, not to speak of their being used in foreign countries. If they are conducted in the common language, they will be available to all research workers in the country at least and if they are of a standard high enough to command respect of scholars outside the country, the common language will be studied by foreign scholars also for keeping themselves up to date.

WIDENING THE SCOPE

Therefore, what I contemplate is that as the study of the common language advances and deepens, it would be utilised

more and more in all spheres of activity where the appeal has not to remain confined to the limited regious but is addressed to the country as a whole. I do not know and connot say at this stage when, if ever, it will be possible for all the High Courts to accept the common language for their purpose. If that is not accepted, then in that case there is no doubt that their important decisions on law, as also, under the like contingency, all the laws passed by the legislatures in the different regions will have to be made available in translation in the common language to the rest of the country and the accuracy of the translation will have to be guaranted by the authorities concerned.

Unless at least this much is done, it will be impossible for the different regions to keep themselves posted with the affairs of the provinces. I also contemplate that in every province there will be some newspapers in the common language which will circulate all over the country just as English newspapers do today.

If all this has to be done, then there is no escape from the fact that universities and other educational institutions should be able to give instruction in the common language of a pretty high order so that university students who care to go in for high administrative posts, for a political career and for high scientific and technical attainments, journalism, etc., should be able to attain high proficiency in the common language. For this purpose, study of the common language as a second language will have to be made compulsory from the high school stage onwards, in every province, and its study will have to be encouraged in every way.

No one need be frightened by this. I think Indians have a genius for learning languages and once this position is understood they will not take much time in mastering the common language whatever their own language might be. English is completely a foreign language and yet the very first generation of students after its introduction showed high proficiency in it. Ever since then proficiency in the English language acquired by the Indians has not increased; knowledge of the English language has spread only in extent, not in depth.

There is, therefore, no fear that if systematic instruction is started, any particular region will be left behind in the race of

life. Such apprehension as there may be can easily be removed by some device for removing undue advantage which any particular region may have in this respect.

USE OF SANSKRIT

Shri Mashruwala's second reference is as follows : "The knotty and controversial point with regard to the eighth clause of your excellent conclusions is not that several new words will have to be drawn from Sanskrit, but the type of the words and the way in which they will be drawn or coined from the language. I strongly feel that the coined words should be such as would fit in well with the structure and genius of our spoken languages, and be lovable for their simplicity to ordinary men, women and children of all provinces for their sounds and pronunciations They must avoid pedantry and love for ostentation in style as much as possible."

I have suggested in the eighth conclusion of my article Sanskrit as a source from which we shall have to draw if we have to coin new words. I agree that in this matter pedantry should be avoided and as far as possible coined words should fit in with the structure and genius of the spoken language and be lovable for their simplicity. How far that will be possible, it is difficult to say, but their is no doubt that our efforts should be in that direction.

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SANSKRIT LITERATURE—A TREASURE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Nearly ten years ago, Maharajadhiraj Shri Kameshwar Singh had invited me to address the scholars of Bihar in the Shri Mithilesh Mahesh Ramesh Lecture series. On that occasion, I had given expression to my views in two lectures which have since then, been published in book form under the title : 'Sanskrit Ka Adhyayan', In these, I had drawn attention to the richness and glory of Sanskrit literature and had briefly surveyed its achievements in the spheres of philology, grammar, alphabet, script and numerals in general and more particularly in the spheres of Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy, Physics, Medicine and Surgery, Anatomy and Physiology, Metallurgy, Botany, Agriculture and Gardening, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Dancing, etc., etc. In my concluding remarks, I had urged the desirability and necessity of a change in the traditional system of Sanskrit studies as prevalent today. It, therefore, gives me great pleasure to find that this Institute is being established today for the study of that literature and scientific research into the materials available in it. I balieve that the study of Sanskrit literature would be useful for the solution of the problems facing the world today and, therefore, our universities should encourage its study. I had confessed in those lectures that even though I was no scholar of Sanskrit, I had come to hold this view on the basis of what I had

* Address on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Sanskrit Research Institute at Darbhanga on November 21, 1951,

learnt from the opinions of Sanskrit scholars as expressed in their books. These are that the basic elements of our present-day cultural life are to be found in Sanskrit literature. In this connection, I would like to say a few words today about the characteristic fcatures of Sanskrit literature. Of course, it is not necessary to relate all this to scholars. For those, however, who are ignorant of Sanskrit and who, due to their training in the present educational system, give great weight to whatsoever western scholars and those Indian scholars following in the foot-steps of the former, say on any subject, I consider it would be sufficient to give some citations from the authoritative works of such scholars. I also entertain the hope that these educated Indians would duly realise the importance of Sanskrit and would help in bringing about a Sanskritic *renaissance.*

Sanskrit literature, as I have already remarked, is an invaluable treasure-house not only for India, but also for the whole world. Its great age, its extent, its richness of content, its beauty and sweetness of language are all such as to make it not only shed light on the whole history and culture of humanity but also to fill the heart of man with beauty, pleasure and joy and to give him a gli mpse of the world of ideals by realising which alone can he make his life fruitful and achieve salvation from the bonds of this world.

It is so exaggeration to say that the history of the cultural evolution of mankind cannot be prepared without the help of Sanskrit literature. There is no other nation in the world which has been able to keep its ancient literature intact as we Indians have been able to do. The very works of the Rishis have come down to us in their entirely and we can see in them a clear picture of the conditions of that age. That picture, no doubt, is very helpful in reconstructing our ancient history today and, I am sure, it will continue to remain useful even in the future.

There is no single scholar in the present-day world who does not believe that in the reconstruction of the ancient history of mankind, Indian literature will play an important role. This is not only due to the fact that Indian literature is the oldest in the world, but also because there was not a single country in the civilised world of antiquity in which its influence had not been felt. Indian literature left its impress on the cultures of countries from China to Ireland, from Scondinavia to Indonesia. It is universally

known that more than a thousand years ago, numerous works of Sanskrit had been translated into Chinese and Tibetan and thereafter into Japanese and that Indian literature had become an indistinguishable element of Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese culture. In the islands of Bali, Java, Sumatra and in Cambodia also, Indian literature had an unchallenged sway and it was the main basis of the culture of those countries. What is not so widly known, perhaps, is that the influence of Indian literature was felt in the Middle East and Europe too. Of course, there is not the least doubt about the fact that numerous scholars from India went to the capital of the Abbasi Caliphs and made the people conversant with Indian science and culture; also, that they translated some works of Indian literature into the official language of that Empire. There are enough references to indicate that Indian literature had a deep influence on the ancient culture of the Middle East and Europe and, in so far as their fables and folk tales are concerned, it may be said without any exaggeration that it is more or less another form of the same kind of literature in India, Indian literature, by virtue of its having woven itself into the consciousness of all the nations of the civilised world, has become an indistinguishable element of their culture. And so, for its proper understanding, it is necessary that the original Sanskrit literature should be studied. Referring to this Dr. M. Winternitz, in this "History of Indian Literature" written in German says, "All these facts—the great age, the wide geographical distribution, the extent, the wealth, the aesthetic value and still more the value from the point of view of the history of culture, of Indian literature—would fully suffice to justify our interest in this great, original and ancient literature." He observes further on : "though the Indians are not flesh of our flesh, or bone of our bone we may yet discover mind of our mind in the world of Indian thought . . .". "If we wish to learn to understand the beginnings of our own culture, if we wish to understand the oldest Indo-European culture, we must go to India, where the oldest literature of an Indo-European people is preserved." Still further on, he says, "Moreover, the immediate influence which the literature of India has exercised over our own literature, too, should not be underestimated. We shall see that the narrative literature of Europe is dependent on the Indian fable literature in no small degree. It is more specially German literature and

German philosophy which, since the beginning of the 19th century, have been greatly influenced by Indian ideas, and it is quite probable that this influence is still on the increase, and that it will be augmented still further in the course of the present century". This statement of Winternitz. even today, has the same, nay, even greater force than what it had when it was first made. When he had made this observation, the archaeological remains at Mohenjodaro had not been studied. But since the day of their discovery, the age of Indian civilisation has been carried still further into the past and, in my view, the importance of Indian literature—specially the importance of Vedic literature, for the history of our ancient culture has increased still more. Of course, it is needless to point out that for an adequate understanding of the mind of our people and of the forces working on it, the importance of a proper study of Sanskrit literature is very great. There is no single aspect of our national life which is not suffused by the principles and ideals laid down in Sanskrit literature. Not only for understanding the character of human civilisation, not only for understanding the part played by our people in its revolution and for having a clear understanding of our national mind, but also for deriving joy from the appreciation of the highest and best form of art, it is necessary for us and for the world to devote itself to the study of Sanskrit literature. There is no aspect of life, no medium of expression, no form of art in which Sanskrit literature has not achieved perfection. The King and the beggar, the man of the city as of the village, human beings, birds or animals, civilised and uncivilised beings, conscious beings and unconscious elements, soul and God—each and every one of them has been depicted with a delicate touch in Sanskrit litetrature. There is not a single region of the human heart which has remained hidden to the eye of the Sanskrit poets; not the deepest feelings but have been given the most artistic expression; not a single aspect of nature which is not mirrored there; no single branch or aspect of society which has not been carefully analysed in it and no ideal, passion or evil within its bosom whose exact picture is not to be found here; nor is there any problem relating to the destiny of mankind and concerned with man's happiness and welfare which has not been carefully discussed and answered in Sanskrit literature. Such a fine description of animal life and analysis of its importance to man and such sympathy for the

animal world as is found in Sanskrit literature are rarely to be found in the literatures of any other people in the world. If Sanskrit literature is for the learned and grown-up, it is also full of interesting material for people of common intelligence and children. There are such fine descriptions of the marvellous world of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Nishchars and of their miraculous powers and thrilling deeds that children, who are easily thrilled by miracles and marvels, find in them inexhaustible material for the satisfaction of their curiosity.

There are aphorisms so full of wisdom as to imprint themselves on the human mind, by hearing and remembering which even ordinary men can become wise. There are such stories in Sanskrit literature, by hearing which even the ignorant can become learned. From the point of view of art, it is highly developed and can be rarely paralleled elsewhere. If the saying that the ocean can be confined in a jar has been realised anywhere, it is in Sanskrit literature. In no other literature is found such perfection in sound-echoing signs as is found in Sanskrit. If one wants to see the subtleness of ideas, mirror-like delineation of character, he can hardly find it elsewhere in such perfection as in Sanskrit.

It can be said that Sanskrit literature is one of the few literatures in which there is such a fine arrangement and use of words. It is no doubt true that Western scholars feel that from the literary point of view these aspects of Sanskrit literature are not very commendable and they even condemn the prolixity of the figures of speech as also the aphoristic character of the Sutras. But one should not forget that their fundamental approach to art is different from ours and that their approach is more or less conditioned by the mechanised civilisation of modern times. So it is quite natural that they do not find much pleasure in these wonderful experiments in word construction, but if one views the whole question without prejudice, it may be said that it is only the study of Sanskrit literature that can give an idea for the great magic there is in words.

Our literature is not only unique in making an amazing use of the Sanskrit language but there is also no literary form in which it has not reached perfection. Prose, Poetry, Drama—in all of them Sanskrit writers have achieved greatness. As Winternitz observes, "Indian literature embraces everything which the world literature comprises in its widest sense : religious and secular, epic,

lyric, dramatic and dedactic poetry, as well as narrative and scientific prose." Even before the beginning of the Christian era, great works of literature had been composed in our country. It is true that, so far, the chronology of Sanskrit literature has not been settled on a satisfactory and final basis. But, even then, it is universally admitted that within the period 1500 B.C. and 1000 A.D. Sanskrit literature has been enriched by numerous literary jewels and out of these many unique works had been composed even before the commencement of the Christian eras. Books such as the Upanishads in the sphere of metaphysics, such great works as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in the sphere of epic poetry and such works as those of Bhasa in the sphere of dramatic poetry had become elements of Sanskrit literature by that time.

This element of greatness in our literature is, to a certain extent, due to the inherent peculiarities of the Sanskrit language itself. Its grammar and vocabulary are of such a character that words can be used with facility and in such a suggestive manner as can rarely be done in other languages, be these ancient or modern. By virtue of its power of compression, a whole world of ideas can be put in a single Sutra. This is not possible to the same extent and will never be so in any other language of the world. Commenting on the works of Bhartrhari, Keith points out the greatness of the Sanskrit language. He says, "The extraordinary power of compression which Sanskrit possesses is seen here at its best; the effect on the mind is that of a perfect whole in which the parts coalesce by inner necessity, and the impression thus created on the mind cannot be reproduced in an analytical speech like English, in which it is necessary to convey the same content, not in a single sentence syntactically merged inio a whole, like the idea which it expresses, but in a series of loosely connected predications." Besides the power of compression, Sanskrit words often have a number of meaning and thus in Sanskrit poems such wonderful *double ententes* can be composed as cannot be done in any other language. Commenting on the poem of *Ramapalacharita* of *Sandhyakara Nandin* which the author had written with a view to delineate the character of both Rama and also Raja Rampala, a contemporary king, Keith observes : "The fact, which at first sight appears incredible, is explained without special difficulty by the nature of Sanskrit. Treating each line of verse as a unit, it is possible to break it up very variously into words by grouping

together the syllables. Then the meaning of compounds is often vitally affected by the mode in which the relations between the words composing them are conceived, even when the words are understood in the same sense and the compound is analysed into the same terms. Further, and this is of special importance, the Sanskrit lexica allow towards a very large variety of meanings." Thus, by virtue of its principles of 'Sandi' and 'Samas' and by reason of its many words having a number of meanings, the Sanskrit language possesses such a natural flexibility as permits it to be moulded in accordance with any purpose or form that one desires. Besides this natural characteristic, Sanskrit literature grew in a geographical and racial environment which was heterogeneous and cosmopolitan in character. India is a vast country of varied climates, beautiful natural scenery, multitudinous flora and fauna, animals and birds, wherein numerous communities of different colours and customs are to be found. Naturally, therefore, it is not surprising that the literary artists of India were able to plaint all this backgroud in such fine word-pictures. "In India", says M. Williams "literature, like the whole face of nature, is on a gigantic scale. Poetry, born amid the majestic scenery of the Himalayas, and fostered in a climate which inflamed the imaginative powers, developed itself with oriental luxuriance." But, much more than the geographical and racial environment, it is the basic ideals and assumptions of life held by the Indian people which have played their part in making Sanskrit literature so fine and rich. Since remote ages, it has been the faith of the Indian people that life is not an ideal dream nor a tale told by an idiot but that it is a means towards self-realisation. It is true that Indians believed and still believe that lasting happiness or power can be achieved by men only after securing release from the cycle of births and deaths or by a merging of the soul in the Brahman—this is the inherent purpose of wordly life. But, at the same time, it is their faith that the soul is bound by the law of Karma, and that through the power of good deeds, it gradually move towards salvation and that by doing civil it becomes more and more entangled in worldly bonds. This faith led the ancient Indians to divide life into four stages and to place before themselves a four-fold ideal of life. They believed that by discharging the obligations of each stage of life and by devoting one's life to the realisation of the four-fold aim, one's soul can acquire the power of merging itself into the

Brahman. Even if one found himself unable to practise this *Sadhana* and *Tapa* in one life, he had no reason for despair, for he was bound to take birth after birth so long as he did not achieve salvation. So, it is clear that Indians never had the idea that life could ever—finally and ultimately—be futile and purposeless. Their belief was that every soul was destined to merge in the *Brahman* and so they never considered temporary defeat as defeat for all time to come. In other words, they were incorrigible optimists about the achievement of salvation or eternal happiness. This optimism was the main foundation of their literature. In the entire field of Sanskrit literature, we do not come across a single tragic drama; not that the hero of a story does not have to go through suffering or that he does not face obstacles and difficulties. He has to suffer all these, but in the long run, these trials and tribulations prove the stepping stones for his complete success and happiness. The heroes in all our famous legends, such as 'Nala-Damayanti,', 'Harishchandra-Saiva' and 'Satyavan-Savitri', had to undergo much trouble, but in the long run reached the land of happiness and success. So it is that our literature, instead of being the picture of the fleeting moment, has become the embodiment of the aspirations of our people for the lasting welfare of the individual and of the world.

Our literateurs held the view that literature and art are not merely the means of enjoyment or entertainment for the writer or the reader, but a means for the realisation of the four-fold ideal of life. It has been the traditional belief in our country since ages past that by the mere reading or hearing of our main Epics, a person can achieve salvation. Defining the "Mahakavya", the writers and poets also said that its study was for the realisation of the four-fold aim, namely, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha.* It is this very idea that echoes again and again in the different branches of Indian literature. It is for this reason that, in the long run, truth and righteousness are sure to triumph in Indian literature.. I believe that, due to this basic ideal, the importance of Sanskrit literature is enhanced still further. The chief objective of a poet's work can only be to show the sublimation and transfiguration of the brute into man, for only in such a delincation lies the spiritual welfare of the poet himself as of mankind. Sanskrit literature is the embodiment of this striving of our poets and literateurs. Another special characteristic of Sanskris literature is

include it in the syllabi of its educational institutions but should also afford all possible encouragement to its study. At the same time, however, I consider it necessary to say that those who devote themselves to the study of Sanskrit should also be required to acquaint themselves compulsorily with the trends of modern life. How the world is moving on today, what its direction is, what wonders have been performed by science as a result of modern research and how deep an impression has been and would continue to be produced on our life, are matters which are not hidden from the gaze of any one. Even if one wants to be indifferent to them and turn a blind eye towards them, one cannot do so. Therefore, Sanskrit scholars should have at least some acquaintance with, if not mastery of, these subjects. This can be easily acquired with the help of Hindi books, though the old-style Pandits look down upon Hindi with some degree of contempt. There should be Sanskrit books on modern subjects for such people. I am not aware how far this has been done or whether any scholar is taking interest in this matter, but I have learnt with great pleasure that some scholars are trying to popularise modern subjects through the medium of the Sanskrit language. In this connection, I may mention, the *Paramarth Darshan* of the late Mahamahopadhyaya Ramavatar Sharma which, I understand, is a beautiful and learned exposition of our modern and ancient philosophy. Similarly, I have seen three poetical works on the life of Mahatma Gandhi and on Gandhism. One is by Pandit Rajaswami Shri Bhagadacharya called : *Bharatiya Parijat*—the second is *Uttar Satyagraha* by Pandita Kshama Rao and the third is *Gandhi Gita* by Shri Srinivas. I also understand that a Sanskrit translation of our Constitution has already been done and arrangements are being made for its publication. These are auspicious signs and they give an indication that there are still scholars of Sanskrit who can place before the learned world the study of modern subjects in that ancient *Devavani.* I hope that alongside the study of Sanskrit, people will revive the flow of Sanskrit literature whose progress has been arrested for the last several centuries, so as to enable the later historians of that literature to record that Sanskrit was not in any way backward in comparison to any other modern language in the propagation of modern knowledge through its medium. I hope that this institution would continue to make progress by leaps and bounds and that it would fulfil the aspirations and aims with which it is being established today.

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NALANDA—ANCIENT SEAT OF LEARNING*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

We have gathered here in Nalanda, the renowned ancient University town, with the noble aim of reviving the ancient glory of Nalanda in the world of knowledge. It is with this object in view that the Government of this State has decided to establish the Magadh Research Institute for the study of Pali and Prakrit and research in Buddhist literature and philosophy. Nalanda is the symbol of the most glorious period of our history, for not only did the quest for knowledge blossom here into its finest shape but also because it bound together, at that time, the various different parts of Asia with links of knowledge. There are no national and racial distinctions in the realm of knowledge and this was true of Nalanda. The message of Nalanda was heard across the mountains and oceans of the Asian mainland and, for nearly six centuries, it continued to be the centre of Asian consciousness. The history of Nalanda dates back to the age of Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira. According to Jain records, Lord Mahavira met Acharya Mankhila at Nalanda. Lord Mahavira is said to have lived here for fourteen years. According to the *Sutra-Kritanga*, Lepa, a rich citizen of Nalanda, welcomed Lord Buddha with his entire wealth and possessions and became his disciple. According to Lama Taranath, the learned historian of Tibet, Nalanda was the birthplace of Sariputra, whose "samadhi" survived till the reign of Emperor Asoka who enlarged

*Speech delivered at Nalanda, on 20 November 1951,

it by installing a temple around it. Though tradition associated Nalanda with Lord Buddha and Emperor Asoka, yet it emerged as a flourishing university some time in the Gupta Age. Taranath maintains that both Bhikshu Nagarjun and Arya Deva were associated with Nalanda University and says further that Acharya Dingnag visited Nalanda and had a scholarly discussion. In the fourth century A.D., Fa-Hien, a Chinese pilgrim visited Nalanda and the stupa constructed at the spot where Sariputra took birth and died. But, it was not until much later that Nalanda acquired its outstanding position. In the 7th century A.D. when, during the reign of Emperor Harshavardhan, Huan-Tsang came to India, Nalanda was at the height of its glory. Referring to a *Jataka* story Huan-Tsang writes that it derived its name from *Na-alam-Da*, the peace of mind which Lord Buddha failed to achieve in his previous births. However, the gift of knowledge is, by its very nature, so inexhaustible that neither the giver nor the recipient can ever feel totally satisfied. The gift of money, no doubt, has its limits, but knowledge is free of any limits, and even one solitary individual can, by his sole effort, flood the whole earth by the light of his attainment. The urge, imperceptibly bound with the name of Nalanda, was not valid only for the past, but should also continue to inspire in future the newly established Magadh Research Institute. We should resolve to pursue truth and present the results of our research to humanity, with an open mind.

Nalanda University was born with the help of liberal public charity and donations. It is believed to have been founded originally with an endowment created by 500 traders who purchased land with their money and offered it to Lord Buddha as a gift. By the time of Huan-Tsang's visit, Nalanda had become a full-fledged university and had, at that time, six large Viharas. The 8th century inscription of Yasoverman contains a telling description of Nalanda. The high spires of the Viharas, in a row, seemed to be sky high, and around them were tanks of clear water, in which floated red and yellow lotuses, interspersed by the cool shade of the mango groves. The architecture and the sculptures of the halls containing rich ornamentation and beautiful idols, filled one with wonder. Although there are many *sangharams* in India, but the one at Nalanda is unequalled. At the time of the Chinese traveller It-Sing's visit, there were

300 big rooms and eight halls. The remains discovered by archaeological excavations fully bear out the truth of these descriptions. The teachers and students at Nalanda were made completely free of economic worries. Besides the gifts of land and buildings, the revenue of too villages had been set apart, in the form of a Trust to meet recurring expenditure. This property of the Trust had increased to 200 villages by the time of It-Sing's visit. The three States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal had taken considerable part in the building and financial maintenance of Nalanda University.

Copperplates and statues of the age of Maharaja Dharmapal Deva and Devapal Deva of Bengal have been found at Nalanda in the course of the archaeological excavations. One of these copperplates sheds light on the international relations maintained by Nalanda. We learn from it that Shri Balputra Deva, the Shailendra Emperor of Swarna Dwipa (now a part of Indonesia) had sent his envoy to Devapal Deva, the ruler of Magadha, with a request that he should make a gift of five villages to Nalanda on behalf of the former. According to this copperplate inscription, Balputra, the Emperor of Java, being deeply impressed by the achievement of Nalanda, had a large Vihara constructed here to give visible expression of his devotion to Lord Buddha. This is, but, an example that has survived by sheer chance and which gives us an indelible impression of the glory which Nalanda enjoyed the world over. Indeed, the Nalanda Mahavihariya Arya Bhikshu Sangh was held in great esteem all over Asia. Many clay seals of this Sangh have been found at Nalanda.

At the time of Huan-Tsang's visit, Nalanda had 10,000 students and 1,500 teachers. From this, it is obvious that the teachers could pay individual attention to the education and training of their students. In fact, Nalanda was, then, only a centre of higher education, similar to the institute of post-graduate research which we are now proposing to establish here. Scholars from such distant countries as China, Korea, Tibet, Turkestan and Mongolia came to Nalanda to study and collect Buddhist literature. It had the biggest library in Asia. It was from Nalanda that copies of many manuscripts, through travelling pilgrims, reached China and were translated in Chinese. In a way, Nalanda had blossomed forth as a centre of higher learning, and it was considered a mark of honour to be associated with

Nalanda. The citizens ensured the preservation of many a rare volume by getting copies and keeping them here for safe custody. When, in the 12th century, its library was destroyed, many of the manuscripts had, already, found their way to Nepal and Tibet, and many of these manuscripts are still intact there.

Without any reference to one particular religion, too lectures were delivered, every day, at Nalanda. Both Brahmanical and Buddhist literature, philosophy, sciences and art formed part of the syllabus of Nalanda University. A majority of the monks used to study the works on *Mahayana* and the other eighteen *Nikayas* of the Buddhist faith, but there also was provision for the study and teaching of the Vedas and allied leterature. The liberalism practised by the educational authorities of Nalanda was unique and the seeds of Nalanda's rise and progress lay in the academic attitude which freely exposed itself to the region and philosophy of all mankind, without any prejudice, whatsoever.

The syllabus of Nalanda University was drawn up with great wisdom, and by following it, students were increasingly successful in their daily life. It had made a study of five subjects compulsory; Grammar, by which one could get an adequate mastery of the language; Logic, which taught the student to judge every issue rationally; Medical Science, a study of which enabled the student to keep himself, as also others, in perfect health; and, lastly, handicrafts. Knowledge of one craft or another was compulsory to make the students financially independent. Besides these four subjects, Religion and Philosophy were studied, depending on one's own special interest. The high ideal which Nalanda had set in the matter of the courses of study deserves our attention and consideration even now. It was this well co-ordinated course of studies which made the knowledge of its students both deeply penetrating and utilitarian in its practical application. Huan-Tsang studied Law, Yoga, Phonetics and Panini's Grammar at the feet of Acharya Shila Bhadra, the Chancellor of the University and after it, for a period of five years, read through many Buddhist works, and was specially interested in the works of *Mahayana*. Similarly, It-Sing, the Chinese traveller, studied books on *Therawad* at Nalanda.

Acharya Shila Bhadra was then considered to be the greatest authority on Yoga. Before him, Dharmapal was famous as the Chancellor of Nalanda. Shila Bhadra. Gyan Chandra, Prabha

Mitra, Sthiramati, Gunamati and other learned teachers were contemporaries of Huan-Tsang. Even after he had returned to China, his close contract with his Indian friends continued as before. When he was leaving Nalanda, Acharya Shila Bhadra and other monks requested him to stay on. In reply Huan-Tsang said;—"It is impossible not to have deep affection for this land—the birthplace of Lord Buddha. But my only purpose in coming to this country was to make further research into the religion of the Lord so that I may benefit my fellow brethren. My visit to this place has proved of immense benefit to me, but on my return to China, I intend to benefit others through what I have learnt here, as also to use my knowledge for purposes of translation so that other men may also have for you the same gratitude which I feel towards you."

Even after Huan-Tsang's return to China, correspondence continued between him and Gyan Prabh, the chief disciple of Acharya Shila Bhadra. Of this correspondence, three letters still exist, which revel that even subsequently, the scholars of Nalanda continued to send copies of Sanskrit works to China. On his return to China, Huan-Tsang spent the rest of his life in translating religious books of India into Chinese and this, the literature from Nalanda occupied a prominent place. He has written that the Emperor of China himself wrote a preface to these translations and ordered the authorities to propagate these books in every country. The result of these worthy endeavours for which Chinese scholars and Indian scholars worked enthusiastically and unhampered by distances of place and time, was that about 2,000 books which were translated from original Sanskrit into Chinese are still intact in the Chinese *Tripit*, even though the Sanskrit originals are lost. I hope one of the objectives of the Institute we are establishing, today, would be to publish this Chinese literature in its Sanskrit form with Hindi translation. In order to have a extensive library like the Ratna Sagar at Nalanda in Huan-Tsang's time, we would have to draw up a comprehensive plan to collect, on behalf of the Magadh Institute, all the Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit original works, as also, works written on them in other languages; we must also resolve to implement that plan fully. This project can be completed only with the co-operation of the Government and the people.

The scholars of Nalanda carried the torch of knowledge to

foreign countries. For instance, Strong Chan Gampo, the Emperor of Tibet, with a view to introducing and popularising Sanskrit script and the knowledge of India in his country, sent a scholar called Thonmi Sambhot, to Nalanda, where he studied Buddhistic and Brahmanical literature under Acharya Deva Vida Sinh. After this, in the 8th century A.D., Acharya Shanti Rakshit, the Chanceller of Nalanda University, went to Tibet in response to an invitation from the Emperor. Acharya Kamal Shila, the chief authority on Tantra Vidya also visited Tibet. Nalanda scholars learnt the Tibetan language and translated Buddhist and Sanskrit works into it. Thus, they presented an entirely new literature to Tibet and gradually converted its inhabitants to Buddhism. Acharya Shanti Rakshit of Nalanda established, for the first time, in 749 A.D., a Buddhist Vihar in Tibet. It is necessary that the books available in the *Tripitak* literature of Tibet, be translated, once again, into Sanskrit. They would not only shed new light on Indian history and culture, but would also help up to form a complete picture of the contribution made by Nalanda University in the pursuit of knowledge. Further, it is also believed that Korean scholars came to study *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma* at Nalanda. It is quite possible that Korean translations of original Sanskrit works may still be extant in Korea.

Besides being famous for its studies in literature and religion, Nalanda was also a centre of fine arts and influenced the art of Nepal, Tibet, Indonesia and Central Asia. The bronze statues of Nalanda are impressive and beautiful and scholars believe that statute of Buddha found at Kurkihar bear traces of the Nalanda school. It is true that the achievement of Nalanda was born of an all inclusive pursuit of knowledge in which Religion and Philosophy, language and handicrafts had equal importance. We should aim at reviving the educational system of a bygone age and re-establish Nalanda as a centre of art, literature, philosophy, religion and science. Cultural renascence can come about in the life of nation only when a large number of determined scholars devote a life time to a search after truth. Though the Magadh Research Institute is still very young, but, moulded to the need of the age, it can be expected to develop into the centre we wish it to be.

31

BHOODAN PAD YATRA*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I regard it a great privilege to be associated with this morning's function. From its very inception I have watched the Bhoodan Movement not only with great admiration but also with great interest. It is sometimes forgotten that Mahatma Gandhi did not regard independence as the sole objective for which he was working. He looked upon *Swaraj* as a means rather than an end. The end that he aimed at was the creation of a new order of society from which all exploitation will be ended and in which all human relations will be governed by love and not by an extraneous authority. If was for this reason that even for the attainment of *Swaraj* he prescribed non-violence as the only method to be used. It is true that we were unarmed and could not fight the mighty British power using violence. But other countries more or less similarly situated had taken recourse to arms and had succeeded in attaining their freedom, though in a limited sense. Gandhiji wanted his country to be free in a wider sense which meant that he did not merely desire political freedom, but also freedom for the individual from all forms of oppression and exploitation. In the early days of the Non-cooperation movement, some high-placed Englishman had said that by disarming his followers, Gandhiji had practically disarmed the British power. In those days it was difficult to believe that Gandhiji would succeed in his mission. Yet the latter never had any doubt

*Inaugural Speech at Cape Comorin, 2 February, 1956.

in his mind. In spite of some initial set-backs, the country became free in 1947. But with the attainment of political independence, Gandhiji's mission was not over. He wanted to give our freedom a social and economic content. But, most unfertunately for us and for the whole world, he was taken away by Providence at a time when he was in the best position to give his message to the world. Gandhiji believed in a democratic order which was free from all forms of exploitation and in which there were no disparities in wealth. But he did not want to make the poor rich by dispossessing the wealthy. He desired that those who had riches should treat themselves as trustees for the poor; in other words, he wanted that every rich man should shake off his selfishness. While holding riches, he should hold them not for his own individual enjoyment but for the benefit of all.

Land has always been regarded as one of the richest and most precious possessions of man. Vinobaji wants people to dispossess themselves of this most precious of possessions. There have been cases of dispossession of land in other countries. But this has happened through bloody revolutions. In India, we are trying to achieve the same objective through love. Vinobaji is thus trying to fulfil what was left incomplete by Gandhiji. His is thus only a symbolic movement. Because land is so much valued, he has launched his first attack against it. In reality, he is trying to revolutionise our entire thinking process. If his movement succeeds, we shall find ourselves in a different world. If we can part with land, our most precious possession, we can certainly dispossess ourselves of less precious things. Vinobaji's appeal has already made a deep impression on the people. In fact, I cannot think of any other instance in world's history where 46 lakh acres of land have been given away as free gift by their owners; and remembers that these gifts have been made by people who are very rich as well as by people who are very poor. While some of the rich have given of their plenty, the poor have not hesitated to share poverty. The Bhoodan Movement has by now completed five years of its life. We are left with about a year and eight months in which to reach the target fixed by Vinobaji. Every movement takes time to develop a tempo. The Swaraj Movement which was started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 attained its objective only in 1947. In the same way let us hope

that the Bhoodan Movement will also gather momentum as it goes on. It has already had the advantage of a very impressive start.

In their fight for freedom, our countrymen did not hestitate to make big sacrifices, even involving the loss of life and liberty. After the attainment of Swaraj, we are not being asked to make such great sacrifices but only to share our wealth with the poor. Let us hope that our past experience will stand us in good stead and we shall succeed in this movement also. Gandhiji's spirit is watching us and I am sure it will give us the necessary strength and inspiration. Government is trying to help the Bhoodan Movement in every way it can. But it is necessary that it keeps up its non-official character. Too much of Government participation will deprive it of much of its value. Your Prime Minister has blessed the movement and I am personally here to inaugurate the *yatra*. But, for this work, we consider ourselves not as members of the Government, but as humble servants of the country. I would, therefore, ask every one of you to make your own contribution to the success of the movement. I wish godspeed to those who are going to join the Bhoodan *yatra*. We have had other *yatras* of great historic significance. The great Satyagraha of 1930 was started by Gandhiji with a *yatra*. The Bhoodan movement also owes its origin to a *yatra* by Vinobaji. This *yatra* has not ended and is not going to end before success is achieved. Just as the Ganga rises in the Himalayas as a small streamlet but gathers force and volume as it goes along, so also this movement which was started five years ago in the shape of a small rivulet is bound to gather momentum as it proceeds. The *yatra* which is going to be started by Shrimati Sushila Nayyar and Shri Cheriyan Thomas today will serve as one of the tributaries of the great Ganga. Let us all, therefore, pray for the success of this movement.

32

THE GANDHIAN WAY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It was a happy idea to start an institution named after Gandhiji for the purpose of cultural advancement. Mahatma Gandhi lived for nearly eighty years. During this long period there was hardly any aspect of life which he did not touch. Those of us who had the opportunity of living when he lived and worked have been really very fortunate. Generations yet unborn will recall with wonder and admiration how millons of us could see him walking this land, talking to people and actually working with his hands. In the course of his eventful life he gained unparalleled fame as a political leader. But it will be only a partial view of his life if we think that he was merely a political leader. His political career assumed importance because he fought for the freedom of the country with his unique weapons of truth and non-violence. Not that others before him did not think of freedom of the country or work for it; in fact, many devoted their whole life to this mission. The unique contribution of Gandhiji's lay in the fact he placed in our hands weapons that brought us our freedom. Non-violence and *Satyagraha*, on which he insisted, were not intended only for political purposes; he looked upon them as the fundamental principles of his life and applied them to every question that came up to him for consideration. He did not claim, at any time, to have evolved a philosophy or a system of philosophy. He was never tired of saying that instead

*Speech on the occasion of the inauguration of Gandhi Kalai Munram at Rajapalaiyam, 16 November, 1955.

of writing a thesis, he was engaged in the actual application of his principles to concrete problems that came up before him: and if we turn over the pages of his writings, we can see him devoting column after column to very small and minor items. To him a small item was not unimportant if it involved a question of principle. He was so cautious about the application of his principles that he evolved a whole series of propositions which applied to the life of man. A small incident like the shooting of a monkey or the killing of a calf would attract his attention as much as the big question of the winning of *Swaraj*. If he was so very careful about his principles and so very punctilious about their application, you should not think that he did not take a comprehensive view of things. He had before him an integrated picture of what a country should be like. The foundation for the type of society he desired to see established was truth and *ahimsa*. In particular, he wanted to see these principles applied to India where we have variety of religions, languages, customs and traditions. He wanted to forge these diverse elements into a strong nation. He felt that if people following different religions insisted upon everybody else accepting their religion, there would be no end quarrel. Similarly, he said, if people speaking different languages quarrelled with one another, there would be no peace and amity in this land. He, therefore, insisted upon *ahimsa*, the principle of living and letting others live. He applied this principle not only to his opponents but also to his own people. He said that if we adopted non-violence against the British Government, it was all the more necessay that we applied it to our own lives and did not fight among ourselves on the basis of religion, caste, sect or creed. Gandhiji also wanted that the rich people should regard themselves as trustees of their wealth for the sake of the poor. That way he wanted to solve through *ahimsa* the big problem of disparities in wealth.

It is quite true that every problem cannot be solved through *ahimsa*. Everything has its own action and reaction. In the world of today, we find that countries have been fighting countries and nations have been fighting one another for many a long year. Within our generation we have seen two World Wars fought for the purpose of ending war. Can anyone in his senses claim that war has ended or all this violence which has been there for ages succeeded in ending violence ? Whether in the sphere of religion,

economics or politics, violence has never solved any question. If it had solved problems, there would have been no problem left for us to solve. But the fact that there still are problems today shows that they have not been solved by the methods so far pursued by Governments. Can *ahimsa* solve our problems ? The answer is none too simple. The application of *ahimsa* to our present day problems is no doubt difficult, but perhaps it is not more difficult than *himsa*. Take the example of an army which fights. If there is a war in one generation, the army is prepared throughout the period for fighting. Every soldier has to prepare himself from day to day and hour to hour for the fight; and apart from the actual soldier, the whole nation has to prepare itself to support the soldiers, and this process has gone on for ages and from generation to generation. Nobody can say that *ahimsa* has been tried out to the same extent in any country or by any people. The great service that Mahatma Gandhi rendered to mankind was that he gave it a trial in this country. He had to deal with such material as was then available to him. I cannot claim that we were very good material; yet, even with this indifferent material he was able to achieve his objective. It should not require much effort to imagine that if it is tried on a bigger scale, we can achieve other nobler objectives also. It is a fact that the world today is beginning to turn towards Gandhiji. With the atom bomb and the hydrogen bomb, they have practically come to the end of the tether as far as the other method is concerned. Thoughtful and far-seeing people have recognised that. They are on the look-out for an alternative, and naturally their thought turns to Mahatma Gandhi's method. But, unfortunately, there is so far no complete understanding of that method. It will not be right to think that other people are unable to understand Gandhiji. We who have had the privilege of living in this country during his time have also not fully understood him, and if that is so after all our experience, how can we blame others ? But the little that we have understood to him should be enough for us, at any rate for the time being, to place his ideals before others. Our association with him places on us a special responsibility. It was a misfortune not only for India but for the world that at a time when he was in a position to give his message to the world, he was taken away by one of us. That was a great calamity. Let us hope that after that event we have understood something of Gandhiji. His *ahimsa* was tested at the last moment and he stood

the test very successfully with the name of Ram on his lips; and we can very well hope that on his death he had become stronger and a greater supporter of his own instrument than even perhaps during his life-time. Since we won our independence through his method we find ourselves into position of special responsibility. The fact that we are now the moulders of our own destiny and are in a position to influence the world enhances that responsibility. Let us hope that the day is not far off when we shall be able to do something on his lines. Our Prime Minister has been fighting hard for peace in the world. That is one of his cherished aims. But that work will not be complete unless we have adopted Gandhiji's *ahimsa* in toto. We have to adopt it in our everyday life and the discrepancy that is noticed by everybody between our professions and our practices should be removed. *Ahimsa* cannot come unless it is built upon the foundation of *Sanyam*. We have, therefore, to practise the old *Niyams* which were given to us by our forefathers long long ago. In the prayers which Gandhiji used to say every day, there was *sloka* in which he mentioned eleven *pratigyas*. He used to repeat these *pratigyas* or vows every morning and evening at the time of his prayer, and it is on the foundation of these that the structure of *Ahimsa* can be built. It is a matter for regret and shame that with Gandhiji's passing away we have been somewhat sliding down the scale. That is seen in all spheres of life. It is no use blaming anyone for it. The best thing is to find out the fault and correct it. That is not only the best but also the easiest way of improving society. You cannot be sure that you have found the faults of others; but you can be sure about your own faults. One may not succeed in removing the faults of others; but if one desires, one can remove one's own. It was on this philosophy that the whole programme of non-co-operation was based. Remove your own weaknesses, and the oppression of others will cease. It is, therefore, necessary for us to take advantage of institutions like the Munram which is going to be housed here, and try to improve ourselves. It was for this reason that I felt that it was a very happy idea to have started an institution of this sort in this town. Let on one imagine that he is too small for any great purpose. One may not be able to achieve great things, but one sometimes may damage great things by what one does knowingly or unknowingly. Let us, therefore, be vigilant at least not to damage, and that can be done by each

one of us improving himself. You will get good material in this institution in the books which will be stocked here. You will also get opportunities of exchanging ideas with one another and these must precede actual action. I hope you will make the best use of this institution and fulfil the high hopes of Sri Kumaraswami Raja and his associates.

33

GANDHIJI AND OUR CONSTITUTION*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

You have conferred a privilege and an honour on me by asking me to perform this unveiling ceremony. The life of Mahatma Gandhi had become so intermingled with the life of every person in this land that there can hardly be any Indian who was not deeply influenced by him. There have been in this country, as in the world, many great men who served their people devotedly and whose services were remembered by their people for centuries after their passing away. But, it would be difficult to find a parallel in this country of elsewhere in the world to the great life of Gandhiji. He was able, within his life-time, not only to infuse a new life and courage in the hearts that had been deadened by fear but was also able to make them march from the dark depths of slavery to the sunny heights of freedom.

Gandhiji's achievements were not confined to the political sphere alone. His work embraced the entire gamut of social life in this country. In fact, there is no aspect of our life which has not been influenced by him and I hope that our life would continue to be influenced for years to come by his teachings and philosophy.

In view of his intimate relationship with the people, I think it would be unnecessary and useless for me to say anything in

* Translation of speech delivered in Hindi on the occasion of the unveiling of a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi at the Punjab Legislative Assembly Chamber on October 2, 1950.

detail about his life this evening. I believe, many of you have had the privilege of sitting at his feet while he was living. Others who did not have that good luck must, at least, have had the opportunity of witnessing his great deeds, listening to his inspiring words or reading his stirring articles and enlightening books. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say much about his life.

It was on this day that he was born and I am sure it will remain a memorable day in history for ever. It will greatly edify and enlighten us if we sit down on this auspicious day to contemplate and reflect on his teachings. I would like the members of the Assembly who are present here today and who have given me this privilege of unveiling the portrait of Gandhiji, to remember that their responsibilities which were already heavy and the great expectations which the people had of them have become all the heavier and greater today. It is my belief that you can learn much about the means by which these responsibilities can be discharged from what Gandhiji had taught us.

I know that the State of Punjab has had to pass through many a trouble and tribulation recently and her difficulties have not come to an end as yet. I have received reports confirming the fact that those who had to pass through the travail of partition faced their troubles with great fortitude and courage. The people of this State have also exhibited great sympathy for these unfortunate people and have helped them to their utmost capacity. I understand that the Government of this State has also, in its own way, successfully striven to bring about order in the chaos that was reigning and has succeeded to such an extent that it can be said to have reached the level of efficiency which the big States possess. I know that it is no easy task to compensate the people for the losses that they had to suffer on account of the partition and it may well be that it is not found possible to compensate them fully at any time even in the future. Even then, every attempt is being made to provide to them as much relief as possible.

In this connection, however, I would like to place before you Gandhiji's view which he often used to reiterate. He used to say that if one wanted really to serve his country and its people, it was essential for him to concentrate on service, that is to say, he should think of service and service alone and not of any other gain or advantage for himself. True service can be performed only when a person is sincerely and single-mindedly devoted to the cause of

service itself.

It is a well-known fact that in every country where a democratic government exists, representatives to the legislature are elected by the people. Such representatives should be honest servants of the people and should have no other aim before them except the service of the people. The only way by which you can escape all the troubles and difficulties which have be fallen your is to act in the spririt of dedication and service. In the Constitution that we have adopted for our country, it has been provided that every adult citizen shall have the right of voting in the election of representatives. It is our expectation that honest and sincere people would be elected to the legislatures. I also hope that these people would work to promote the interests and welfare of the people.

There is, however, one matter to which I would like to draw your attention pointedly. The Constitution, as it is today, implies the existence of a party system similar to that of Great Britain. I do hope that our Government would also function as it does in Great Britain. In this connection, I would like to emphasise the fact, which is often forgotten, that parties can be of different types. Factional groups which often develop in our country cannot be termed parties in the right sense of the term. A political party, to my mind, means a group which has got a clear-cut programme of its own—a programme conceived in the interests and for the well-being of the people. There cannot be any objection to the establishment of a party of this kind. There can, of course, be differences between parties but the growth of selfish factions and groups of the type we find these days is extremely reprehensible.

I would like that when you assemble in this hall to deliberate over the problems that are facing the Punjab State, you should keep your eyes on the portrait of Gandhiji and derive inspiration from it. It had always been the view of Gandhiji that those in power should be true servants of the people. I may here refer to what I used to say before I assumed this office—though it may not appear very nice today—that true servants of the people should always be ready to work in the villages or to go to prison or even assume office as and when directed to do so by Gandhiji. If so desired by him, a true worker would not hesitate even to undertake the job of a *harijan*. They are, in fact, different aspects of public and national service. I believe that the work that a

volunteer does when he goes to clean a village, has the same nobility and the same high purpose which characterises the work of those occupying high executive posts. I personally feel that I would have no hesitation in taking up the work of a volunteer in a village if so desired by the country. If we serve the country in this spirit, keeping before us the teachings of Gandhiji, I am sure we would be able to serve it much more effectively than otherwise. Truth and non-violence were the basic tenets of Gandhij's creed and I would urge upon you that you should keep them always in your view. Then alone would you be able to serve the cause for which the people send you here.

34

VILLAGE AND SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I am glad to have got this opportunity of saying a few words about khadi and village industries. I have always welcomed such occasions because I think cottage industries have an important role to play in the economic set-up of our country today. Perhaps it would have been unnecessary to lay emphasis on this point if there was not an impression prevailing among the people that cottage industries have no place in the present-day world in which industrialisation is looked upon as the hall-mark of material progress. I am afraid this impression is as groundless as it is misleading. It is evident that in a country like India were 80 per cent of the people live upon agriculture and allied callings, the only result of excessive industrialisation will be more production by fewer men, which instead of solving the problem of unemployment will render it more complicated. Its proof lies in the fact that although our country has advanced sufficiently on the road to industrialisation, the incidence of unemployment instead of coming down appears to have gone up.

In our country special significance is attached to handicrafts and such small-scale industries as can be easily managed at home during spare time. If we lose sight of this fact and imagine that we can solve the problem of unemployment through industrialisation, I am sure, we shall only have disappointment in store for us. Unless

*Inaugural speech at a conference convened by the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board, Poona, 17 November, 1954.

the problem of unemployment is tackled successfully, we cannot remove poverty, because whatever the quantity of wealth available in the country, it can be shared only among those who have some kind of work to do. The main victims of poverty are, after all, those who are jobless or who may be partially employed. Therefore, it is in the interest of the people of the rural areas and of our country's prosperity as a whole that the wrong impression referred to above is corrected and all efforts made to popularise and improve our cottage industries.

The most important step adopted in this direction in recent years is, as pointed out by Shri Vaikunthbhai Mehta, the establishment of the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board by the Government of India. By doing so, Government has not only recognized the importance of village industries but also taken upon itself the responsibility of improving them. It has been accepted as a matter of policy that in our planning for social and economic betterment small-scale industries ought to be given a place. Goverment has also undertaken to provide the necessary means to achieve this end. I do not think it is necessary for me to say much about the first Five-Year Plan. All of you know that Government has laid down in most unambiguous words its policy with regard to village industries in its Plan. As for the Second Five-Year Plan, it has been decided that before finalising the draft of the section dealing with industries, representatives of the various small-scale industries should be consulted. The real problen is that of adjustment between the small-seale and the bigger industries. The aim of all industrial undertakings is to increase production and national wealth. We must see what place should be given to village industries and to bigger industrial undertakings in order to ensure India's maximum prosperity.

I admit that handicrafts and cottage industries can flourish only if certain concessions and facilities are offered to them. So far as facilities are concerned, the Government of India has accepted, in principle, to provide such concessions to these industries as are likely to help them without at the same time affecting adversely the bigger industries. I should, therefore, think that the real problem is that the question of reserving a field for khadi and handloom industries Khadi has received some impetus by whatever direct help has been given to it by Government. Consideration has also been given to the question of reserving a field for khadi and

handloom industries, so that the element of competition between handloom and mill-made cloth is eliminated. I think we have to extend this concession by reserving the fields for other cottage industries as well, so that in those fields bigger industries are not allowed to operate.

Till such concessions are given to cottage industries and as long as heavy industries are permitted to compete with them, it is difficult, if not impossible, for cottage industries to grow. But at present it is the bigger industrial undertakings which are being afforded facilities like concessional railway freights, etc. These are having a deleterious effect on the growth of village industries. I am afraid this process has not only to be stopped, but in some cases at least, it has to be reversed. Let us understand it clearly that financial subsidies alone will not mean much for small-scale industries. I know that Government has been helping the bigger industries to the turn of crores of rupees, and to be able to do so it had to impose the burden of heavy taxation on the people. Take sugar, for example. To save sugar factories from the competition of foreign producers, Government has been subsidizing Indian sugar industry for a number of years at the cost of many crores. Similarly, steel industry in India has had to be subsidized heavily. I see no reason why Government should not extend similar help, on the same scale, to village industries, when millions of people benefit from them and get employment because of them. It is no argument to suggest that it is useless to manufacture an article on a small scale when the same article can be manufactured and offered at a cheaper price by bigger industries. Our hesitation to offer certain articles at a slightly higher price would virtually mean growing unemployment for millions and consequently forcing them to starve. We have, therefore, to choose between unemployment and starvation on the one hand and a slightly higher cost of certain manufactured articles on the other. No wise man, I am sure, would prefer large-scale unemployment to paying slightly higher cost.

I would, therefore, suggest that we must act courageously and draw a list of those fields which have to be reserved for village industries and in which these industries have not to content against either indigenous mill-made goods or foreign imports. This is the economics of village industries. This alone will suit our country, whatever may be the requirements of other countries. Let me hope

that keeping in view the fact that village industries are the biggest source of employment, Government will do all that is possible to encourage them.

I am at one with Shri Vaikunthbhai that increase in production cannot be accepted as our sole ideal. Our real aim should be to make the people prosperous and to keep the maximum number of them employed. It is widely known that millions of our countrymen derive their sustenance from handicrafts and small-scale industries. To encourage these industries and to develop them is, therefore, one of our foremost duties. I admit that production can be increased more easily by installing heavy machinery, but if such increase in production is achieved at the cost of cottage industries, it will mean more harm than good to our people. This is now generally accepted as true, and the Government of India also appreciates this fact. We have, therefore, no reason to feel concerned on this score.

Now that we know that Government is pursuing a policy of encouraging village industries, let us address ourselves to the task of developing them from the economic and artistic points of view. I would, in this connection, advise you to study the growth of small-scale industries in other countries. In some of those countries, cottage industries have been improved and developed to such an extent that they are able to stand on their own feet in their own right. There may be certain industries in our country which can benefit from the supply of electricity. The day is not far off when our countryside will be electrified. As the various river valley projects, which are under execution at present, are completed, there will be no dearth of power in India. With the help of electricity we can certainly save time and labour and also perhaps improve the quality of the manufactured goods. We have only to be careful that the use of electricity does not reduce the level of employment and in the sphere of production quantity does not take the place of quality. Art is one of the features of our handicrafts. Electricity should not be allowed to spoil it. With these precautions, we can certainly employ electricity for the improvement of cottage industries. Our aim should be to develop these industries to such an extent and to create such a wide demand for their products that these can flourish in course of time independently, so that they are able to dispense with the special concessions and facilities offered to them by Government. I hope you will agree

with me that this should be the aim of the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board.

I am very happy that all of you connected with the Khadi and Village Industries Board are working enthusiastically. Your annual report shows that the Board has made some headway in popularizing the products of village industries. You should draw inspiration from the fact that the work to which you are devoting yourself has its foundations in social justice, economic equality and self-sufficiency. The more you progress in this direction, the greater will be the employment you provide to the people, particularly in the countryside. Today when the problem of unemployment threatens to assume alarming proportions, nothing can be of greater advantage to the nation than an avenue which promises employment. This belief should be your sheet-anchor and you should be able to draw inspiration from Bapu's sacred memory. Although village industries have been a feature of Indian life since ages, the credit of raising them in the eyes of the people and getting for them a place in our national economy, goes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Nothing is farther from my mind than to suggest that sentiment can provide the basis for village industries to stand upon; but even so we need not be chary of accepting that many a good cause often benefits from sentiment and the enthusiasm it generates. In actual fact, however, we may be sure that the real basis of the development of village industries can be only economic.

I fervently hope that your efforts will bear fruit and that village industries will continue to progress in India.

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TRUE HAPPINESS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I am glad to have come here today at the invitation of the Chairman of the Delhi Municipal Committee for unveilling the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. I am thankful to him for giving me this opportunity to participate in today's celebrations so that we may give some thought to Gandhiji's teachings. It was 85 years ago that the Mahatma was born. He rendered such great service not only to the people of India but to those of the world that even if we are unable today to understand and appreciate him fully, a time is bound to come when the world will do so.

I had no hesitation in accepting this invitation to unevil Gandiji's statue, but on second thought I wondered if it was at all necessary to have a memorial of this kind. I was at once reminded of the thousands of historical monuments scattered all over Delhi. Once upon a time there munuments were beautiful buildings, the very embodiment of royal grandeur. Some of the places which must have once been the abodes of kings and nobles and citadels of power, have been reduced to ruins with the passage of time. I could not help thinking of these monuments or what remains of them. Seeing these places, the inescapable thought that it is futile to erect such monuments in memory of man occurs to one's mind. Not only in this country but everywhere else in the world wherever people raised monuments in memory of the great,

*Speech made while unveiling Mahatma Gandhiji's statue at Delhi, 11 October, 1954.

all such structures are today in ruins, entrusted to the care of Archaeological Departments. Except for the archaeologists, few even know in whose memory they were erected. If people occasionally visit these places, it is not because of the men in whose memory they were raised, but because of the importance of the monuments themselves. All these monuments are, therefore, in fact, no more than memorials to certain historical events, good or ominous.

We also know that there have been great souls whose names are on the lips of millions of people but in whose memory monuments of brick and mortar were never raised. Millions pay homage to the memory of such men by following the path enjoined in their teachings. Perhaps in later years, their followers too raised stuctural monuments in their memory, but certainly they live today in people's minds not because of these monuments but because of the life-giving message they left behind. It is this class of men to which Mahatma Gandhi belongs. Therefore, I think it is not necessary to build such monuments in his memory. He will be remembered best for his teachings, his simple living and high thinking and his life of purity.

There are millions of people in our country today who have seen Mahatma Gandhi and often heard him. There are many who came in contact with him and have thereby raised themselves high. There are also some who understood him fully and who have tried to act up to his teachings in actual life. Gandhiji's programme of work was so comprehensive that everyone could get something of interest from his life. He never sat down to compile the tenants of his faith in the form of a treatise. He was free and original thinker and formulated his own principles to grapple with the various problems as they came his way. There is no aspect or problem of life, particularly life in India, to which he did not apply his principles and which he did not try to resolve in their light. Therefore, if we view his life, we shall find that there is nothing concerning the individual and social life which he has left untouched. This is not the occasion to dilate upon that; no have I sufficient time to do so. I also feel that I may not be competent to deal with it. I would like to say a word or two about some of his basic principles today.

There has been, in recent years, a tremendous increase in scientific knowledge of the forces of nature and the way to control

them and utilise them according to the will of man, so much so, that the prosperity of nations varies in proportion to the degree of their mastery of this knowledge. The United States of America is looked upon as a rich and prosperous country. I have heard of an interesting proof of their prosperity. The U.S.A. with a population of about 17 crores has over 4.5 crores of motor cars, which means that if we take four people in a family unit, every family there has more than one care. I am told ordinary workers and labourers in America go to their respective factories and return home after work in their own cars. At the other end of the scale are many backward countries whose people do not get even two square meals a day and who are devoid of all amenities which are considered the source of happiness and prosperity today.

It seems to have been taken for granted that by acquiring certain material resources we can raise the standard of living of human beings. Following this principle, all the countries of the world are set upon acquiring and multiplying their resources. It is no doubt right that a hungry man cannot think of praying. Mahatma Gandhi himself once said that the hungry man sees God only in the form of bread. But even then we should think how far this kind of material prosperity can lead to real happiness. I have also heard that the countries which are known to be prosperous and resourceful are not blessed with mental peace, whereas, on the other hand, we find lots of poor people, who excite our pity, leading a happy and contented existence. The truth is that the source of real happiness is in one's own inner self and not in the outside world. We equate happiness with the world of external things and that is why there is a scramble for acquisition and accumulation of things. The fact is that these things are, at best, no more than means to achieve happiness and not happiness itself. One can experience happiness even without them. Apart from this, it is worthwhile considering what is real happiness.

I think real happiness or peace of mind means the complete freedom for extraneous pressure or restraint or inhibitions. One basic fact which must be recognised is that any kind of inhibition or restraint is irksome. It ceases to be irksome only when it becomes something voluntarily accepted or adopted without restraint or coercion. It is this voluntary adoption of any line of thought or action without restraint or coercion from outside

which brings real happiness. Any substraction from complete freedom is loss of freedom to that extent and implies dependence on something else. Man as a member of society or even as an individual has long ceased to be fully free, if he ever was or can be free. All that can be aimed at or achieved is the reduction or minimization of this restraint or coercion and increasing to the maximum the freedom which man enjoys. His material requirements can be satisfied, it is obvious, only by subjecting himself to curtailment of this freedom. His mental satisfaction and possibly his spiritual aspiration become reduced in quantum and perhaps also in quality by the amount of material satisfaction which in the very nature of things implies restraint. What is generally termed progress has tended more and more to restrict man's freedom. In every department of life and activity man has to submit more and more to external restrains and inhibitions. It follows that there must be consequential and proportionate diminution in the mental satisfaction and spiritual endeavour even though man may not feel that restraint or realise the ever-growing restraint being put on him from day-to-day. It is thus, clear that real happiness lies in freedom from restraint, which, in turn, implies man's capacity to carry on which as little dependence on others as possible. We cannot escape from the conclusion that what is generally called high standard of living has served to increase our dependence on others and to that extent has removed us further from real happiness.

We see in the world of today that distance between country and country has almost been eliminated and nations living for apart from one another have come closer so that if something happens at one place it has its repercussions far and wide. It does not hold good with regard to only dreadful things like war but also of beneficent activities. One of the results of this progress has been that man is now dependent for his daily necessities of life on far off countries. An example will clarify the point. Many of us present here today have known the days when the railway system in India was not expanded to the present extent, when there were no cars or automobiles of any kind and when we had not even heard of the aeroplanes. At that time also food was as important as it is today. Then every community depended for its food on itself and on the land which it cultivated. True, if there was failure of a crop on account of natural calamities like

floods or drought, the community suffered. But otherwise it managed to live on what it produced and learnt in course of time the wisdom and the prudence to save food for emergencies. On account of the improvement in the means of transport today food-grains can be easily supplied from one part of the country to another. We saw recently that food had to be dropped by aeroplanes on areas which were rendered inaccessible by flood. All this sounds so nice, but we have to see whether these developments have enhanced or restricted our freedom. My feeling is that by increasing such needs as he cannot fulfil himself, man has necessarily restricted his freedom.

By giving the example of food imports, I have tried to show our dependence on other countries. That is not all. If far off Argentina, Canada or America has a bumper wheat crop, it results in the falling of wheat prices in India. Because of the improved means of transport, the availability or otherwise of things does not depend on local conditions but on the overall world conditions. If food cannot be imported from other countries because of some natural calamity or as a result of the outbreak of war, the needy country will have to suffer untold misery. We saw during the last war how even people of nautral countries had to suffer because of the restrictions on export and import of certain articles from overseas. So, there are two aspects of the progress. One promises plenty during peace time, the other threatens to release a rich harvest of sufferings and privations in case communications are dislocated on account of hostilities.

It is necessary to remember that even if all of our requirements are satisfied, we are bartering our freedom for that satisfaction. For instance, whenever there is disease in an epidemic form in the country, we have to depend on other countries to supply us with medicines. Similarly, whenever there is a famine, others can save us from its dire consequences, but at the same time, if they like, they can also starve us by withholding the supply of foodgrains. If war breaks out today the belligerents need not resort to deadly weapons in order to kill others. They can do it equally effectively by disrupting the system of transport. Therefore, while on the one hand, we are endeavouring to raise the standard of living those very efforts might resuit in the curtailling of our freedom and independence.

In spite of this all-round progress we have not yet reached a

stage when we could produce an article in sufficient quantity so as to meet the requirements of all the peoples of the world. When we cannot say this about food, which tops the list of man's needs, it is no use talking about other things which are produced in still lesser quantities. That is why the standard of living of all the countries is not uniformly high and presents an unpleasant contrast. Those who possess more are anxious to extort more and more from those who do not possess much. The result is naturally conflict between man and man and country and country. The fear of this conflict has become a nightmare for the modern man.

While preaching truth and *Ahimsa*, Gandhiji also warned us against the dangerous temptation of acquisition and hoarding. He thought that hoarding was no better than theft. It is because of this tendency in man that conflicts arise. Although, to some extent, hoarding of things is not only unavoidable but also desirable, yet for the attainment of real happiness, it has to be avoided as far as possible. Mahatma Gandhi gave the first place to *Ahimsa* in his programme for getting the better of this tendency and for clearing the way to real happiness. In plain language, *Ahimsa* can be defined as the avoidance of coercion and undue pressure on others. We cannot possibly escape conflicts if we go on increasing our needs of hoardable things. These conflicts may be individual or collective. This can result only in one thing, namely, putting pressure on others, and placing them in difficulty for fulfilling our wishes.

It is, therefore, necessary to realize that what we have assumed as axiomatic truth, namely, that increase in material prosperity also means the attainment of happiness, is neither quite correct nor so self-evident. This assumption is true only up to a certain limit, and the more we transgress this limit the more remote become our chances of being happy. This limit has to be fixed by man himself. This is undoubtedly beset with countless difficulties, but I do think that it is not altogether impossible for man to achieve happiness without the usual paraphernalia which passes for his everyday necessities. This is exactly what is meant by the adage, 'simple living and high thinking'. It was by practising this truth that Mahatma Gandhi could enjoy that happiness which an humble follower of his is unable to have even in the palatial Rashtrapati Bhavan.

I do not suggest that ambition or high aspirations or desire for progress should be discouraged. But let us be sure that our will to progress and rise high will materialise in the true sense only after we have realised that the source of our happiness does not lie outside us but is enshrined within our own hearts. Our happiness will vary directly in proportion to the degree of our faith in the above truth. The more we try to achieve happiness, basing it on the outside world, the more we shall be inviting conflicts and depriving others of their happiness.

On this solemn occasion, if we could realise the futility of this kind of memorials and the artificiality of what is generally regarded as happiness, I should think that we shall not have met in vain at this function today.

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THE HARIJANS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I consider it a privilege to be called upon to open the Mahatma Gandhi Community Centre in your Colony. This Centre is being started with the help of the monetary grant given by the Ford Foundation of America. I am sure the people of this Colony can consider themselves lucky, not only because the first Community Centre is being opened here but also because the Father of the Nation has lived here for many a week. This place has been sanctified by his sermons, which, delivered after the prayer meetings held in this Colony before and after India's independence, still echo in our ears. You can rightly feel proud of the fact that the words which stirred the people not only of this country but of many foreign lands were uttered at this place.

Among the few things which were closest to Gandhiji's heart was the uplift of those called Harijans. He had espoused the cause of the backward people, particularly the Harijans, even before he came into the political arena. Temperamentally he was not an armchair idealist; he was for more keen about practice than about theory. Therefore, the moment he took a decision, he began to translate his resolve into action. He was always happy to see and talk to Harijans and as far as possible he loved to stay in their midst.

Our country has given to the world quite a few lofty

*Speech made while inaugurating the Mahatma Gandhi Community Centre at the Harijan Colony, New Delhi, 5 April, 1954.

reformers like Gautama Buddha, who considered the service of humanity and relieving the distressed as the great mission of their lives. India can legitimately raise its head even today and say that Mahatma Gandhi was also one of that distinguished line of succession.

This Centre is being opened after the name of that noble soul. Not only this small Colony where the Centre will be housed, but the whole country will draw upon this Institution for inspiration. It is the duty of those who live in this Colony that, imbibing the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, they learn to live nearely, go in for education and do not allow any inferiority complex to dominate them. The Constitution which our country has adopted lays down in clear words that here there will be perfect equality between man and man, every one would get equal opportunity of progress and development and that there would be no distinction of high and low among our countrymen. As merely to say so will not take us anywhere, our Constitution provides that till the time the various groups and classes have come up to a uniform level, special privileges and facilities will be offered to the backward people to make up the leeway. I have an unswerving faith that the silvery rays of the sun, which has arisen on the Indian horizon after centuries of slavery, will brighten up every nook and corner of this land and that every citizen, irrespective of any distinction of colour, caste or creed, will feel the life-giving warmth of these rays.

The facilities which will be available to you in this Centre will give you an opportunity of all-round progress in life. There is a provision for education and recreation far children, medical care of the sick and also arrangements for social gatherings and pastimes for the grown-ups. Besides, you will be able to learn some trade or cottage industry. It is now for you to turn this opportunity to your advantage. You have before you a chance of making your lives happy and of training yourselves to be good citizens.

As I said earlier this is the first Centre of its kind opened in this country. It is hoped that many more Centres like this will be eventually opened in other places. But you should not forget that your Centre will be looked upon as something in the nature of an experiment whose success or otherwise will affect the whole scheme of starting such centres. A heavy responsibility,

therefore, devolves upon you. You have to make it a success so that all of your profit by it and the authorities also get sufficient encouragement to pursue this scheme. I am confident that you will not only appreciate this responsibility but will be able to carry it out fully.

Before declaring this Centre open, I would like to congratulate you all. Let me hope that you will be guided and inspired by Bapu's immortal message, which you have heard several times, and that you will go ahead on the road to progress, making the task of Harijan uplift and social reform easier. In this noble work you have my best wishes with you.

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IMPORTANCE OF KHADI*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It is a matter for gratification to me that under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries Association have organised this Exhibition of khadi and products of other village industries. In a big industrial city like Bombay and at a place from where you can see the smoke of giant chimneys all around rising into the skies, it requires some courage to organise an exhibition of handspun and handwoven cloth and other goods produced by the human hand. But we must remember that India is a country of villages having something like 7 to 8 lakhs of them. For such a big country, the big cities can almost be counted on one's fingers. About 90 per cent of the total population of the country lives in villages and no less than 80 per cent of it is dependent on agriculture for subsistence. In any scheme of economic improvement of the masses of this vast population, we cannot afford to ignore or neglect these factors. The programme for the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and other villages industries is based on a recognition of these fundamental facts and on an appreciation of the other no less fundamental fact of the grinding poverty of our masses, which stares us in the face wherever we go and which makes itself felt in a high death rate of our population, in terrible infant mortality, in the spread of many preventible diseases, in the

* Inaugural Address at the Exhibition of Khadi and products of other village industries in Bombay on 27 December, 1935.

prevalence of diseases due to malnutrition and in a general deterioration in the physique of the people at large.

The causes of this poverty are many and our economists, writers and patriots have been exercising their intellectual acumen, giving their assiduous labour on research and daing practical work to soften and mitigate the rigours of this devastating poverty. I have no time to go into these causes in detail here except mentioning some of them. We have an ever-increasing population that is dependent on agriculture alone. In the very nature of things the land that is available for agriculture in this country cannot be increased indefinitely and we have almost reached the limit of expansion. The very nature which limits the land is ever adding to the population and thus, the land which had to support one person, say, fifty or sixty year ago, has now to support at least two persons today.

The burden on the land in the shape of rents and taxes and revenue is ever increasing. Every revision of revenue or assessment almost invariably results in an enhancement, and even catalysmic falls in prices like those witnessed during the last few years do not bring about a reduction or at any rate an adequate corresponding reduction in the burden on the land.

So long as the present top-heavy and otherwise highly and ruinously expensive system of administration continues in the country and has to depend for a considerable portion of its revenues on the land revenue, no reduction in that burden is possible. The Government have to find the money for running the administration and the expenses of that administration have increased several-fold within the last fifty years. Not only have salaries, pensions and other allowances per head been considerably enhanced but hands employed have been increased. To take a few outstanding instances, the expenses on the Army, since the Congress came into existence, have increased more than three-fold and in spite of recent reductions are about thrice what they were, say, after 1857, when the Crown took over India from the East India Company. The number of Provinces has increased and is going on increasing. For example, the Province of Bengal, some thirty years ago, was administered by one Lieutenant-Governor single handed without any Executive Councillors and without Ministers. Today, we have the three Provinces of Assam, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa, and very shortly we shall have a fourth

separate Province of Orissa. Where on Lt.-Governor ruled we shall have four Governor aided by about twenty Executive Councillors and Ministers with all their subordinate staff and paraphernalia. Even districts are in the process of being sub-divided with necessary additional expenditure. The new Constitution, which is being thrust down our throats, is going to cost some 8 to 10 crores of rupees extra per year. How can we hope in these circumstances for any reduction in the burden on the tax-payer ?

The so-called national debt and the drain from the country are immensely greater than what used to be, say, fifty years ago.

Insofar as these factors contribute to our poverty they are and will continue to be beyond our control so long as India does not come to her own and does not become mistress in her own house, able to fashion her life and cut down her expenditure according to her own desire.

But it is not that we are poor only because we have perforce to spend more on administration than formerly or than we would like to spend. Our poverty is no less—if not more—due to our forced un-employment and inability to produce what we should, or can. When the British and other foreigners came to India we had flourishing village industries and these made India prosperous. Today most of these industries are either dead or dying. Many of them have been killed. A country, depending only on tilling the soil, can hardly be ever prosperous. Agricultural work does not require all the time of the agriculturist throughout the year. Even in Provinces where most intensive agriculture is done I do not think it takes more than 180 days of the agriculturist in a year, in other places it takes considerably less and I believe I am not wrong in taking an average of 140 days in the year as the normal occupation of the busy cultivator who has enough land and other facilities to keep him engaged. But these 140 days are so spread over practically the whole year that he cannot leave the village for any length of time and go to a distant factory for even seasonal work. The natural result is unemployment for more than six months in the year, in the absence of any supplementary industry which can be established without much capital and carried on in the village without requiring the worker to migrate to a distant place and in which even the off-hours of a day may be utilised. Our old village industries were of such a nature, and thus, enabled the time that is

now wasted in their absence to be utilised and converted into wealth.

We have no idea of this tremendous unemployment. The British Government, with all its resources, has not even once dared to get even an approximate estimate of it during the last 175 years of its rule. As against this we have the spectacle of Governments in other countries making the reduction of unemployment as the first item in their programmes and in some countries like Englaad providing for insurance against unemployment. Ministries are formed and broken on this single issue of unemployment in the West and the Far East. How can we expect a vast country like India with its incalculable unemployment to be anything but the prey of most grinding and soul-killing and body-killing poverty ?

In the measure we are able to reduce this unemployment, we shall be able to reduce that poverty; and it is as a potent means of reducing this unemployment that we turn to the revival of these villages industries. About a hundred years ago, numberless men and women were engaged in spinning yarn and weaving cloth. What has become of those spinners and weavers ? Have we given them any substitute for the work which they were doing and which they have lost ? The answer can only be in the negative. Till recently I have seen numberless men and women engaged in this season in pounding and husking rice. Many were employed in grinding wheat and corn. The by-products like the outer shell of the paddy, the powder which is got when the rice is polished and the coarser bran of the wheat and corn are all being used in some form or other. The outer shell makes very good fire during winter; the powder and bran are used as human food or fodder for cattle. All this work has in some places passed out of the hands of the villager to mills and factories and in most places is just in the process of being transferred. No substitute has been found for those rendered thus unemployed in the villages. Only some ten to fifteen years ago I used to see in villages round about the village in which I was born, numberless small sugar-making establishments. Every village had a number of small cane-crushers which were worked by bullocks and men. The cultivators themselves used to cultivate and grow the cane, crush it in their crushers and convert the juice into gur or jaggery in pans, the fuel required being found out of the dry leaves and the

coarser stalk of the cane left after the juice had been extracted, the green leaves and the finer portion of the stalk being used as very good and nourishing fodder for the bullocks during the cold winter months. The gur or jaggery produced in the village was converted into white sugar in what were known as small *karkhanas* in the village itself. All this has practically disappeared within the last few years since the advent of large sugar factories, and when these factories were put out of action last year by the earthquake, one of the problems which had to be faced by the Government and the Bihar Central Relief Committee, was as to how to save the lakhs of acres of sugarcane in the fields and we had to fall back on the old cane-crushers which had to be made in a hurry till the factories began to work again.

In the villages, the oil used to be pressed out of seeds by the village oilman in his small oil-mill. There was no substitute for ghee like what is called vegetable ghee.

The houses used to be made of mud-walls or of bricks and stone pieces all to be had in the villages or made by hand in the villages. The roof used to be of straw or tiles produced in the village and, in the case of the very well-to-do people, of bricks. Today in the larger cities bricks are made in factories, and factory-made tiles have invaded even the countryside. But we have also corrugated steel sheets made in this country or imported from outside.

Parts of the door frames, windows and eaves are made of material imported or imported wholesale.

When we turn to the inside of the house, the utensils once used to be mostly of brass or bell metal or copper made in the neighbourhood and not a few earthen vessels were used. Today they are being replaced by imported or swadeshi factory-made aluminium pots, enamelware, glass crokery and chinaware.

Not only has the shape and form of furniture undergone change but the place from which they come for the well-to-do people has shifted from the village to the cities and even to foreign countries. The poorer people have, of course, no furniture worth mentioning.

The method of transport has been revolutionised and caused not inconsiderable unemployment.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances. We see how the whole economy of our village life has been changed and destroyed.

But it is not only the economic loss that has told. We are getting foreign and mill-made cloth in the place of the hand-made khaddar. A vast number of people have not only lost their employment by the introduction of machine-made cloth—foreign and Indian—those that are being employed in the factories are torn away from their natural and healtheir surroundings and are forced to live in conditions which make neither for physical well-being nor moral improvement. Apart from these disadvantages, which are inevitable in all factories and large-scale production, we have to eat rice, flour, sugar and oil without vitamin and in many cases adulterated, to live in houses covered with tin sheets which give no protection from heat in summer or from cold in winter and which only add to the noise during rains. We have to depend on aluminium and enamelled utensils which refuse to be kept clean and on crockery and chinaware which break without provocation. And, above all, these factories in the country, for whatever purpose established, have the one common and inevitable effect of increasing unemployment among the people instead of decreasing it.

The great problem in this country is how to find employment for the vast numbers of our masses. Attempts at industrialisation in this country which have been going on during the last sixty or seventy years have had to face many difficulties and will have to face more in the future under the new Constitution that is coming. To the extent they have succeeded, in spite of the great handicaps, they deserve credit for resourcefulness of their organisers. But they have signally failed to solve the problem of unemployment. We know that today more people are dependent on agriculture than they were, say, fifty years ago—not only when you consider the mere number affected but also when you consider the proportion of population dependent on it.

We can never hope to find employment for the entire unemployed population of this country by industrialisation and large-scale production. We have to fall back upon these village and cottage industries. They have a wonderful vitality, To mention only one instance—the handlooms in India are able in a considerable measure to hold their own even today in spite of competition by foreign and Indian mills. Some years ago I read that in the Province of Bihar and Orissa alone they produced cloth worth 5 to 6 crores of rupees and I believe till very recently they were

supplying nearly a third of our cloth demand. This they have been able to maintain in spite of all the capital, skill and scientific knowledge now employed in factories. I venture to think that if even a tenth of that capital, skill and scientific knowledge could be made available to village industries, they would be able to hold their own in many fields. They have died out because we have not cared to think of them, because we have not given them either the capital or the technical up-to-date scientific knowledge to keep them abreast of the times, because, above all, we have refused to support them. In the last fifteen years some attention has been given by the All-India Spinners' Association to the revival and encouragement of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, and we have obtained results which are encouraging to a degree. Not only has the quality of the cloth, both as regards its fineness and its durability, improved codsiderably but also prices have gone down, and today we have entered upon a new experiment of assuring to the spinner who is supposed to be a very low-paid worker as much as she requires for feeding and clothing her and as much as she can earn anywhere in India in any work which she can get, and we hope we shall succeed in this without making any considerable addition to the price of khaddar when the experimental stage has been passed. I am convinced that if only a part of the capital and skill and state patronage and aid that the now employed in our large cloth mills had been available for khadi we would have been able to show that we can produce as much cloth, as good cloth, and perhaps, also as cheap cloth as are produced in the mills, and that without having to import any machinery from foreign countries, without having to send out anything for replacement of parts. We would have further given employment to at least ten persons where a factory gives to one and we could have kept up a host of supplementary industries giving employment to others who have been rendered unemployed on account of the disappearance of the main industry.

What is true of khaddar is more or less true of other village industries. We can speak of khadi with some confidence as we have gained some experience of it. The Village Industries Association will learn from the experience of the All-India Spinners' Association and will undoubtedly be able soon to give even a better account of its activities. But it is not enough for us to watch and wait for the result. We must all help and it is

undoubtedly true that each one of us can help. Those who are inclined to give their time and service will find in the work of khadi and revival of village industries enough to interest them and keep them engaged—enough, I say, even to excite them; for what greater excitement can there be than to see with one's own eyes hungry mouths being fed, shivering children being clothed, and the groaning sick being tended ? Those who want to give money have an object in which charity does not debase the receiver but enable him to look a man to man. We want work for people and not charity and any help given to these movements serves to supply work. Those who are unable to give their time and money can yet help and have no excuse for not helping. They can help by purchasing the products of these village and cottage industries. If we started purchasing them, the industries would spring up in no time. We have to realise that it is our duty to help solve the unemployment problem and that it can be solved only by the revival of these industries. These village industries will not be able to create millionaries but they will be able to feed millions of hungry men and women and we need to feed these millions more than the millionaires in this country. It is with these nigh aims that the Congress has taken up this work of revival of village industries with khadi, as Mahatma Gandhi has said, in the centre, like the sun in the planets, and we hope that this effort will receive the support of all and will be blessed. I ask each one of you to help as you can and at least by purchasing products of these industries. I declare this Exhibition open.

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KHADI AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The work of propagating the use of Khadi has been engaging the attention of many of us for the last thirty or thirty-five years, There are many people here who have given a great deal of time and thought to this question. There is the difficulty of competition with mill-made cloth and there is also the further difficulty that we cannot get khadi in as large quantities as we require.

The economics of Khadi are based on certain fundamental facts of life in this country. We know that India is an agricultural country and something like 70 to 80 per cent of our population lives on agriculture in some from or another. If you consider the life of an agriculturist, you will find that however large or however small his holding may be, he and his family members cannot get full employment throughout the year and he cannot also leave his home and go elsewhere in search of employment because agriculture requires intermittent attention. If the hourse and the days which are thus wasted by the agriculturist and the other members of his family could be utilised, we will have more than enough of khadi to clothe the whole country.

I do not think anybody would object to the low wages because they are earned at a time when the worker has no other work and cannot earn at all. The agriculturist can earn something and that something is not so very insignificant after all, because he need not

*Speech made at the informal Conference of Central Ministers and senior officials at New Delhi, 29 August, 1953.

purchase a single yard of cloth if he gives time to it. I can tell you from my personal experience that one hour of spinning a day yields sufficient yarn to give us as much cloth as we in India are using on an average, that is to say, 15 to 20 yards per head. I think if you take that aspect of khadi into consideration, the question of cheapness or dearness would not arise at all, because it is the result of the people's labour when they are idle. That is the fundamental aspect of khadi, but we know that all the people are not always, inclined to work. We are often inclined not to work. But with all these difficulties, I think, it is possible to propagate khadi as it was done in the past when Gandhiji started the movement and when we were not in the Government and did not expect any help from the Government. In spite of all that there was a class in the country which continued to use it. That class is still in existence. What we want now is that the other classes which were not in favour of khadi should also take it up and it encouragement. I am glad the Finance Minister has agreed to give a subsidy to it.

A question has been raised about the expensiveness of saris for ladies. I think the question should not arise at all. I do not know whether our women are so fully engaged the whole day that they cannot spare one hour a day. If they can use their spare time in spinning they will be able to get a sari practically without any expense, except for the price of cotton. I think that will be cheaper than any other sari they can get elsewhere. If they start wearing khadi woven from yarn spun by their own hands they will not fail to appreciate it. By practice their skill will improve and their nimble fingers will produce khadi of a superior quality.

Those of use who have actually known the production of khadi know what tremendous relief it gives to the class of people who have no other source of income. I remember the days when I myself used to go to khadi centres where yarn was purchased and where poor women clothed in rags would come from miles to sell small bundles of yarn. If their yarn was not purchased for one reason or the other, one could see clearly despair and despondency on their faces. One could not help feeling that was really of great service to the poorest class of people. I think things have not changed even today to such an extent as to obviate the necessity for this kind of relief.

I, therefore, suggest that when we think of khadi we should

not think of the mill-owner or the mill-worker but of the poor women in the village.

We have been very much concerned with the problem of unemployment and very rightly too. When we take this problem into consideration you will realise the degree of employment provided by khadi. If I am not wrong a single man in a mill looking after spindles throws out of employment 200 men. One man looks after as many looms as would produce cloth equal to the output of ten to twelve weavers on handloom in a day. From that you can judge what a tremendous amount of unemployment a mill creates in a single day.

I am not here to plead that there should be no industrialisation in the country. That is a big question and that has to be dealt with on its own merits; but I am placing before you a fact which cannot be denied and the effect of which is being felt in the everyday life of the poor in this country. It is, therefore, necessary that when we think of khadi we should think of unemployment or underemployment of a large number of people who cannot get any other employment. If we look at it from that point of view, you will agree that any subsidy that can be given to it will not be wasted. If you do not give any subsidy, you will have to find some means of subsistence for these men and women. It is much better to support them with this subsidy.

It is our experience that when calamities like earthquakes and big floods occur, the opening of khadi centres in affected areas brings a lot of relief to the people. In fact, in connection with the recent floods in Bihar, I have received telegrams from khadi workers there, asking for the utilisation of funds place at their disposal for opening khadi centres.

The purchase of khadi is not altogether an act of charity. It will give employment to millions. By buying khadi we shall not be wasting money but investing it in artistic things. We have been spending crores by way of subsidies for the sugar and steel industries over the years. We never objected to it, because they needed them. I wish some kind of subsidy were given to khadi also, because it deserves it more than any other organised industry.

I wish to make one or two suggestions. Many of you here are Heads of Departments. I do not suggest to the Army to use khadi for uniforms. I will not even suggest to the Police to

use khadi uniforms. For one thing, we may not have enough khadi today for that purpose. But I do not see any reason why in Rashtrapi Bhavan and all other Government Departments, khadi should not be used, why spats, napkins, towels, curtains, dusters and so many other things which we use every day in offices, hospitals, etc., should not be of khadi. I, therefore, suggest that the Government issue instructions that all the Departments, excepting those of the Police and Army, should make all these purchases from khadi *bhandars.* If that is done, there will be a great fillip to the khadi movement, not only because a great deal of khadi will have been purchased by the Government, but also because it will have a great effect on the people. If this is done, the promotion, sale and disposal of khadi, which sometimes become a problem, will have been solved. And I can say if you can ensure the sale of khadi there willl be no shortage in its production and supply. What is, therefore, needed is a stimulus to the use of khadi, not by force or coercion, but by willing co-operation and by appreciating the fundamental facts about the economics of khadi.

I wish you gave thought to it not only from the economic point of view but also as a matter of national necessity which will help the poorest and also provide employment to a large number of people in the country.

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NATURE AND SCOPE OF NON-VIOLENCE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

With your permission I should like to speak sitting. Please do not regard it as want of courtesy on my part, but attribute it as a concession to the weakness of my flesh.

Yesterday, when for the first time I had the opportunity of meeting the illustrious members of this Seminar, I put myself a question jokingly as to what they would expect me to say today. Yet, behind that joke there was a certain seriousness, because I felt some difficulty as to what I should say. You have had the advantage of discussing in detail and coming in contact with some of those who were life-long co-workers of Gandhiji. You have listened to what they have had to say about his life, about his work, about his principles, about his technique, and I fear that without knowing what they have said, I might innocently and unknowingly be striking a jarring note here and there, or simply repeating what you have already heard. But I felt that Gandhiji, his teaching, his philosophy, his life, all have many facets and we who have had the privilege of coming in contact with him, have not always been able to take a comprehensive view of his entire teaching and have occasionally kept ourselves immersed in particular aspects with which we were individully concerned.

Gandhiji had the knack of selecting people for different kinds of work, and he gave to each what his genius was fitted for; what his training, his upkeep, his capacity was suited for.

*Address to the UNESCO Seminar on Gandhian Technique held in New Delhi, 17 January, 1953.

Therefore, while accepting the general background and the principles underlying his entire teaching, we have occasionally made ourselves narrow in our outlook by emphasising one aspect and ignoring some other aspects. In saying this I do not want to blame anyone, because we are sometimes too much attached to particular aspects of things. I have some advantage over others in this particular matter because I can speak with an open mind and place before you a comprehensive picture of what Gandhiji stood for and preached in his life.

You will understand the significance of what I am saying when you remember that Gandhiji established a number of institutions, each dealing with one particular aspect of his teaching. We had the Spinners' Association, the Village Industries Association, the Talimi Sangh, the Go Seva Sangh, and last, but not least, the Indian National Congress which, though it had been in existence for many year before he came on the scene, he reorganized, galvanised, vitalised and expanded it beyond all recognition. Now these various institutions—I have not named all—devoted themselves to particular aspects. Gandhiji in his own person co-ordinated their work and seved as the connecting link between them.

Gandhiji was not a philosopher or thinker in the sense that he sat in his study, thought out a philosophy of life, and chalked out a programme of action which he left to others to study and implement. He had some fundamental principles to which he stuck all his life; but with regard to the rest, he took up each problem as and when it arose and found out a solution in his own characteristic way. There was no department of life in India which he did not touch, which he did not influence, or to which he did not make his own contribution. In that way he evolved a complete picture of society, arising not from a study or abstract thought, but born out of practical experience of life.

I had another difficulty in coming here. That was more or less a personal difficulty and yet it was not entirely personal.

Gandhiji's name is associated with non-violence, with cessation of war, and I felt a kind of incongruity in my addressing this conference. I am supposed to the Head of a State which has not renounced war, which has not abjured violence, which still maintains her army; not only that, a State which has not accepted and implemented Gandhiji's economic programme also. What right had I, as Head of that State, to address you gentlemen

coming from distant countries to know what Gandhiji did and wanted to do? But I felt again that while you could draw inspiration from what Gandhiji had achieved, you could draw guidance from what he attempted to achieve but did not achieve and left his work and his experiment incomplete. You could also draw some lesson from our success and perhaps even more from our failures. And I felt, if I could not do anything else, I could draw your attention to this side and you might perhaps make some use of that.

Gandhiji believed that non-violence could not be established and violence abjured till the causes which led to violence and made non-violence difficult of application, were removed. We know that all conflicts in this world arise because of conflicting desires of individuals and these desires relate to something material, something external, something which the other man also wants, but which cannot be made available to or shared by both.

Paradoxical as it may seem, Gandhiji made removal of the poverty of our people as one of the fundamental planks in his active programme, but at the same time, as far as I can judge, he was never enamoured of an undefined, indefinite, unlimited rise in the standard of our living as dependent upon external things. While he wanted that we should have our essentials of life, he also felt that no one was entitled to have more than the essentials. These essentials were not to be determined by the individual himself, but by other considerations.

One of these considerations was that what is essential for one person must be essential for others also. Therefore, so long as a thing is not available in such quantity as can be shared by all, it cannot be regarded as essential for anyone. In other words, Gandhiji insisted on a limitation of our physical and material needs. Again, he felt that a society which is based primarily on a desire to extend and expand one's needs, violence cannot be avoided. He, therefore, wanted a society in which the principal factor would not be the multiplication of wants or the means for supplying these wants in the quickest manner possible, but a society which would ensure to all what is absolutely necessary and at the same time not create conditions which cannot but end in competition and, ultimately, in violence.

Whenever we think of conflict, we have to consider the

various aspects which create conflict. I have meationed one. There are various other things which create conflict. We have got differences of opinion, may be with regard to religion, may be in our ideas of society, may be about individual's rights and duties. Gandhiji wanted to remove from society the causes which led to these conflicts. He wanted to limit our phyical and material requirements to remove one such cause. For the rest, he wanted each one to recognise the right of others to have similar rights and to fulfil one's own duties to others. This could be done only by non-violence.

In a society if some people want to force their own opinions upon others, be they religious opinions, or opinions relating to politics or any other department of human life and thought, they cannot avoid conflict. There must be violence. It is only when complete freedom is assumed to everybody to have one's own opinion that conflict can be avoided. These are some aspects of the society he envisaged for himself and for us in this country.

As I said, Gandhiji did not start with a clear-cut programme. He took up individual questions as they arose from time to time. The biggest problem facing this country was the attainment of freedom. He, therefore, concentrated his energies on this question. For attaining freedom, he insisted upon non-violent means. He was opposed to violence not only in action but also in thought and speech. But while he imposed these strict standards on himself he co-operated with others who were not prepared to go so far, but who were prepared to observe non-violence in action while engaged in the freedom struggle.

Thus, it was that he was able to gather round him a large number of people who would not have otherwise gone to him had he insisted upon non-violence in thought and word also. I know of very few people who were able to exclude violence from thought, and, there were not a few who betrayed violence in words. But those who actually betrayed violence in action were few, and that is how he succeeded. He was fortunate in that the soil of this country was specially suited to his experiment. We have our own old traditions of non-violence. Friends from Europe will excuse me if I mention one fact. I have not travelled much and cannot claim to have seen much of any other country. But I paid a short visit to Europe and going through the streets I was

struck by one fact that wherever I went I saw memorials to warriors, memorials to wars and victories. We don't see that kind of thing in this country. And we have the proud tradition that in our long history there has not been one instance when India sent out her invading army to another country. We have sent out conquerors of a very different type, conquerors in the realm of culture, in the realm of knowledge, in the realm of religion, and it we look at history we shall find that our conquests have been more lasting and fruitful. We still have silken bonds of friendship with countries with which we established our cultural relations in ages gone by.

There was another thing which gave us an advantage, although is was of very dubious value. We were disarmed; we were unable to fight with arms, and not a few of us saw in Gandhiji's method a way out of our difficult position. It was a doubtful advantage, because it weakened our faith in non-violence. Anyhow, we carried on and we succeeded to some extent.

The question that you have now to tackle and which I understand, you have been tackling, is the question whether the same method can be applied in dealing with tensions among nations and within nations. Gandhiji thought that it could be applied and that it should be applied; not that he was not conscious of weakness of human beings, not that he was foolhardy and would take risks. We have several instances in our own country when he called off a movement which was supposed to have reached its height, as soon as he noticed some weakness in it. And it was not until the last World War had made some progress that he gathered courage to place before the world this weapon of non-violence. There were occasions when he was invited by other countries to carry his message to them, but his reply used to be, 'Let me make good what I claim in my own country, and then there will be time enough for me to go elsewhere. Otherwise, unless I am able to make good my claim in my own country, what right have I to except that other people will listen to me ?"

During the last World War, a very difficult situation arose. There was a great deal of misunderstanding of Gandhiji's attitude to war. Our rulers misunderstood him. That is understandable, and in my view, even excusable, because they knew no other method and they felt that in a war which was a sort of life and death struggle for them, anyone who was not with them was

against them. Since Gandhiji did not like to be with them in the war, they treated him as one against them. But the misunderstanding was not only on the part of the Government; we who claimed to be near him also misunderstood him.

Just when the Second World War started, and he saw Lord Linlithgow, he broke down in the course of the interview as he visualised to himself the ruin and devastation that the war would bring to London, which he knew so well. And yet he did not have the least hesitation in declaring that India should not and could not participate in the war or help the war effort. There is a seeming contradiction in this position, but really there is none. He had sympathy for England, just as he would have sympathy for any other people in trouble, but at the same time, he was firm in his conviction that war would not solve the problem, it would not lead the world anywhere. Therefore, while sympathising with England, he was not prepared to yield in the matter of his conviction.

Gandhiji's attitude to Second World War was in contrast with his attitude to the first World War, when he had actually supposed the Government and gone out of his way to help in the recruitment to soldiers in this country. Many friends belonging to the pacifist school were unable to understand that position. Gandhiji's view then was that the British Empire was, on the whole, for the good of the world. At any rate, India was deriving certain benefits from it. He also believed that it was capable of being converted, of being induced to change its own viewpoint and accept that of its opponent. He had experience of that in South Africa. He had some experience of that in his very first large-scale movement which he led in Champaran in 1917. He had not yet lost faith in that Empire and, therefore, he felt that if he was prepared to enjoy security under its aegis, it was his duty to help it in its time of need.

That position had completely changed in 1940. He had lost that faith and he had engaged the whole country in a serious struggle against the Empire—not against the British people, but against British rule.

And, therefore, in 1940, he was in a position to say, "we do not want your protection. We do not care whether you defend us or not; leave us, leave us to chaos or to God." And having reached that stage, he was in a position to say, "no more help of

any kind in this war". We of the Congress parted company. Some felt that it was a good opportunity for bargaining, getting what we wanted on condition of help. Others took a more altruistic view and said it was necessary to help the Allies because their cause was just. None of these things moved Gandhiji because he felt that we would neither be serving the cause of non-violence nor even the cause of those who were engaged in the war. He, therefore, stood up against and kind of assistance in the war effort.

It was, if I may say so, the folly of the British Government not to have accepted the help which was offered to it by the Congress. The refusal created a situation in which though the Congress and Gandhiji parted company temporarily, they were again brought together after the failure of the Congress to get what it wanted from the British Government. It then felt there was no alternative before it but to refuse its help in the war effort.

I said, perhaps, you might take some lesson from our failures. It was this aspect of our struggle to which I would like to draw your particular attention. We failed at that moment and we adopted a course which was not liked by him, which was really the course of expediency but not of principle, not of truth, not of non-violence, and no wonder that thereafter, we have not been able to catch up with Gandhiji's ideals and Gandhiji's programme. Having slipped there, we have not been able to feel that we can do away with violence and need have no resort to violence in any circumstances. It was at this stage that Gandhiji wrote his letter to Heri Hitler. He published his appeal to the Czechs to resist non-violently, and addressed his letter to every Briton not to indulge in war but to achieve what they wanted by non-violence.

Unfortunately, and to our shame, to our indelible shame, Gandhiji was taken away from us just at the time when he would have been in a position to make this bigger experiment. We have instances in history of individuals who experimented with non-violence in their own lives and also taught others to experiment with it on a personal plane. It was, however, left to Gandhiji to make use of this weapon on a large-scale to settle differences between groups and between nations.

As I said, he found suitable ground for this experiment in this country. He also found noble adversaries who were capable of yielding to the appeal which non-violence makes. The British had set a limit to their own action below which they could not and

did not go and we must admit that while Gandhiji's success was very largely due to himself and his people, the British also played a noble part in it. I do not know what would have happened if we had got an adversary of another kind altogether, one who would not have put any restrains on his atrocities. Whether we would have been able to stand such a strain or whether even such an adversary would have been won over and conquered by non-violence, is a matter of speculation.

There the experiment of non-violence remained incomplete. It is for you all now to extend the experiment to other spheres and to find out how far you can succeed in the present age and in present conditions. I know there are innumerable difficulties, but the people ought to be educated. Gandhiji did not, therefore, neglect education. But the education that he envisaged and programmed was of a somewhat different kind from the education that we hear of in other countries. His programme of education was a programme of real unfoldment of personality, of bringing out something that was within the child by removing all outward inhibitions and external obstacles. His scheme of education did not contemplate levelling down of everybody to one dead level, as we see on our roads where the big and the small prices of stone are all rolled down by a big steam-roller. It was a scheme in which every child would have full freedom to go its own way, and because there will be no violence, not only would every child grow in non-violence, he would also be able to understand and appreciate it.

I am, therefore, glad that the Seminar has given so much attention to the question of education but I would like you to consider also, not now in this Seminar, but in your own respective spheres and whenever you meet again—whether it is not desirable to bring in Gandhiji's idea of society in which needs would be limited. Without that, I feel, exploitation cannot be ended. If exploitation cannot be ended, it means violence cannot be ended.

I heard with great attention and respect the report which Lord Boyd-Orr made. There was one sentence which rather struck me in a peculiar way. You have decided that you permit maintenance of armies for defensive purposes. I do not know of any war which an aggressive party regards as an offensive war. Every war in world history has been a defensive war, and so long as you keep this

room, this loophole open for defensive war, non-violence in its fullness will not be established. Someone has to dare and take courage in both hands. Gandhiji took courage so far as our own country was concerned when he said, 'Leave us to chaos and to God, but please do not involve us in this war and do not expect us to give help in the war'.

I do not know what he would have said and what we would have done if he were alive today to guide us and to give us his inspiration. But I do feel that he made the position perfectly clear when he made an appeal to the fighting parties during the last war to desist from war in his various writings. It will be wrong to imagine that he at any moment contemplated submission to wrong. That was against his whole nature, his whole being. What he objected to was submission to the lower instinct of our own nature, that is to say, submission to the sense of hatred, submission to a sense of retaliation, submission to a kind of cowardice, which cannot protect the individual or the nation without striking somebody else. He wanted that kind of courage which would stand the worst that the enemy could do, without even feeling resentment against him. He would resist him to the last, and he would successfully resist him because the last step would be the loss of his own life. These some nation today takes such moral courage in its own hands and comes out with a clear-cut programme of no-war under any circumstances, defensive or offensive, and no armament of any kind, the battle for non-violence will continue and is not likely to end in victory.

Some nation has to take that courage; I do not know who will. Evidently, today we are unable to do it although we claim to be the inheritors of Gandhiji's teaching, but somebody has to do it, and, let me hope, that as a result of the deliberations that you have had, you would be able to carry this message to other countries. There is a saying in our country that sometimes there is no light directly under the lamp, although there may be light all round. I hope we shall not prove the truth of that statement, but let me hope that you will prove its truth by taking the light.

I am sure this seminar would have done a great deal if it laid before the world this aspect of his teaching which, I consider, is a practical proposition, a proposition which can be implemented if only we have the courage to do so,

I thank you all for the patience with which you have listened to me, and I am grateful for the opportunity that I have had of coming in contact with such illustrious persons and of listening to them, albeit for a short time. I wish all success to your noble endeavours.

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THE PUBLIC SERVANT IN A DEMOCRACY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

When I was asked to participate in this afternoon's function, I readily accepted the invitation. Not that I know much about the Association, but then, I felt, there was a call which I could not very well refuse. I was asked to unveil the portrait of Shri V.T. Krishnamachari. I have been working with him for the last few years in one capacity or another. He has given off his best to the service of the country in various capacities, and even today, at an advanced age, he not only maintains his great interest in work, but applies himself in a most assiduous manner to every detail of his job. At the present moment, he is dealing with planning, the work of a most exacting nature. One needs to talk to him only for a few minutes to find out how he keeps his grip on every details of the various plans which are being now worked out either in the Secretariat of the Government of India or of the various States. From his present method of work, one can imagine what he must have done when he was very much younger and when he was entrusted with the administration of one or the other Indian State or of the districts in India. We wish Mr. Krishnamachari many many years of useful service to the country and to the cause to which he has dedicated himself.

*Speech on the occasion of the unveiling of the portrait of Shri V.T. Krishnamachari, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of India, and of the laying of the foundation stone of the "Rashtrapati Block" for the hostel at the Indian Officers' Association, Madras, 13 August, 1956.

It is also a matter of pleasure to me that you have asked me to lay the foundation-stone of a block for the hostel of the Indian Officers' Association where many boys of the future will have the opportunity not only of studying but also of coming in contact with those who are actually engaged in the administration of this country.

When the members of the Constituent Assembly were engaged in drawing up our Constitution, and in the process were faced with many problems, one of the most important of them was, which of the Constitutions of the world to adopt as their model. It was not without a great deal of thought and deliberation that they decided in favour of the British Constitution. One of the most important features of this Constitution is that there is separation of functions of those who lay down the policy and those who are responsible for executing it. This feature has been adopted in our Constitution and it forms the basis for the division of work between our Ministers and the civil servants. Ministers may change but the civil services remain at their posts to carry out the policy of the Government. It is, therefore, a matter of great pleasure that the services do understand this position. The Ministers, being new to their work, may sometimes make mistakes, but it is for the civil servants to advise them correctly so that the mistakes which may arise out inexperience may not be perpetuated to the detriment of the country.

When power was transferred to us, there might have been some people who doubted our capacity to maintain the administration. Such persons suspected that we might also have a repetition of scenes which were enacted in similar circumstances in many other lands.

One of the great things which the British did for us was to give us a well-knit, well-organized and well-experienced body of civil servants who were spread all over the country and who, in the absence of everything else for the time being, were holding the country together. I do not exaggerate when I say that I do greatly appreciate the help and assistance rendered by the services in the difficult days of 1947 when we had a tremendous exodus of people from one part of the country to another. I do not know where we would have found ourselves if the services had failed us on that occasion. Not only in the Punjab, but in other parts of the country as well, the transfer of power from British to Indian

hands was effected smoothly. Even in the most distant villages, the authority of the Government remained firm and the peace and tranquillity of the land was preserved by the efficient system of administration left behind by the British. We have, therefore, every reason to be grateful to the services. But it is now time that they render even greater service than was done by them in the past. Times have changed; our ideals have changed. What we propose to do now is somewhat different from what they have been doing so far. In the present period, which may be called a period of transition or resurrection, we have to depend even more on the services for a great deal which we wish to achieve. For, as Mr. Menon pointed out just now, formerly our Government was more or less a police state; now it is gradually on the road to becoming a Welfare State. Formerly our services were primarily concerned with the collection of revenue or the maintenance of law and other or the administration of justice. Now they will be called upon to undertake new and exacting duties like those of managers of dams, river valley projects, industrial undertakings, insurance, banking, etc. These functions are already being performed by the Government. I do not know how many more of such jobs will be taken over by the State and manned largely by our services. While we are always on the look out for talent outside the services, we have largely to fall back upon the existing personnel, whenever there is difficulty. As you know, soon after gaining independence, we had to create a new department under the Government called the Foreign Affairs Department. For filling posts even in this Department, we had to recruit many people from existing services. And I hope, I am correct in saying that, in this and several other new tasks which we have lately entrusted to our services, we have been fully satisfied by their performance.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the service constitute the foundation-stone of the Welfare State. They provide the base on which the superstructure of the government is built. They may not be in the limelight; their names may not always appear in the newspapers—although in India this does happen very often, nevertheless, they perform the most essential functions of the State. I have no doubt that, in future, as the work grows, the services will rise to the occasion and will discharge their duties with as great effectiveness as they have done in the past.

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NEED FOR NATIONAL OUTLOOK*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Let me begin with a word of thanks to you all for the very warm welcome which you have extended to me ever since I landed here last evening from my aeroplane. You have rightly pointed out that I have visited this place more than once. I can tell you that I feel a sense of joy and happiness whenever I happen to come towards the South and particularly to the southern most place in the country.

We have a large country spread over nearly two thousand miles from north to south and more or less the same from east to west, and within the bounds of India we have got every religion that at present exists in any part of the world. We have quite a number of languages which are spoken and understood, although the number of languages which have a written script and a rich literature is not as large. We have different customs, ways of life and modes of doing things, but behind and underlying all this variety, we have a running thread of unity which binds us all and which has held us together through ages since time immemorial. We have had many calamities, invasions and even conquests of this country by outsiders. But, in spite of all revolutionary changes, the country socially and culturally has remained one, and continues to be one. Today, it is also politically one. There is one government which governs the whole country, allowing of

*Speech in reply to the Civic Address by the Trivandrum Corporation, 1 February, 1956.

course for autonomy in the States. We have thus attained now what was not attained before, I mean, cultural and political unity. It is a great achievement which our generation has seen. In times to come when our children's children will read the description of the phase which we have seen and gone through ourselves, they will remember it with a sense of pride and thankfulness. We have, therefore, a great responsibility also. We have undoubtedly had very difficult times since we attained independence, but though God's grace we have managed to get though them practically unscathed.

At the time we were rejoicing the advent of freedom, the country was passing through a most critical period in the wake of partition. Let us hope these unhappy events are now only a matter of history which will soon be forgotten. We have since managed to unify the country. On the eve of Independence, we had, apart from what were known as provinces in British India, a large number of States which were ruled by Indian princes. Some of these States, like yours, were quite enlightened, but in many others there were conditions of a sort of primitive absolutism. I do not know, but those who were not friendly to us might have thought that with the departure of the British, India would break up not only into Pakistan and Hindustan, but also into a large number of small principalities, all warring against one another, as had not infrequently happened in the past. Fortunately, through God's grace, through the wisdom, farsightedness and statesmanship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and through the patriotism of the princes. India has become one; and today the writ of the Republic runs over a larger area than ever it did in the past history of countries. We had the empire of the Hindus, we had the empire of Indians who were Buddhists, we had the empire of the Muslims, and lastly we had the British empire; but not one of them could have claimed to have ruled effectively over the vast territory which is now governed under the Constitution of India by the Republican Parliament, and it is, therefore, a matter of gratification and congratulation. But let us not become complacent about it. Our Republic is not only eight years old, and our democracy too, at any rate in the modern sense, is not older than that. Eight years' time is too short a period for either a Republic or a democracy to attain that kind of maturity which can raise it above care or anxiety. We have, therefore, to be

vigilant to protect our liberty and maintain our unity, so that each one of the States constituting our Republic fees happy and contented, and the people as a whole are prosperous both physically and spiritually. Our great heritage is neither material goods, nor material prosperity, but a kind of contentment which is born of spiritual satisfaction. Let us not, therefore, minimize or forget the value of this spiritual heritage. It has given India a peculiarity of its own. It was not an accident that Gandhiji was born in India or that he worked in India or that he adopted methods which were peculiarly India or that he succeeded without arms in presting freedom for us from a mighty empire which was armed. It was because spiritualism was there in our blood and in our bones. It enabled him to disarm us, and ta make us walk on the narrow parts of non-violence in spite of the violence of the other side. We have, therefore, to be careful to preserve the spirit of non-violence in thought and deed. If we do that, I am quite sure, all will go well.

I said just now that we should not be complacent about our freedom. I also said that our Republic and our democracy are still very young. We recently had a most disturbing exhibition of what norrowness can create in our midst. People who have been working with Gandhiji could little imagine that small changes in the boundaries of States would create such upheavals as we have witnessed during the last few weeks. Let us hope that this is the last of that kind of narrowness which the country has seen. It is for every one of us, in whatever walk of life one is situated or whatever work one is engaged in, to see that we develop a sense of oneness and unity and that we do not mistake the wood for the trees. The trees will not last if the forest is destroyed. The country alone can preserve the States, and no State, however good, however strong, however well-knit, will be able to survive if the country as a whole gets shattered into pieces. We have, therefore, to be vigilant and cautious in our thought, word and deed.

Speaking as I do in the southernmost part of India and coming as I do from the northern most province of India, I can speak for the whole length and breadth of this great country. I ask you, living near the Cape, to believe that the areas at the foot of the Himalayas are yours, and permit me, living as I do at the foot of the Himalayas, to treat Cape Comorin as mine. Unless

we develop this sense of unity and patriotism, and subordinate local, parochial, caste and communal considerations to the consideration of the country at large, we may lose the freedom which we have attained and our democracy may have a short life. This is a warning which recent events have given us and let us take it seriously. I can only hope that the people will rise to the occasion and the foundations of democracy which have been laid in our country will prove to be strong. Whatever disturbances were witnessed in recent months will prove like a loam on the waves of the ocean which do not touch the bottom at all. Like a foam they were dirty and let us hope they will soon disappear. Let us all make our own contribution, however humble, to make the country worthy of its past and worthy of a greater future.

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SINCE INDEPENDENCE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It has given me great pleasure to be with you this afternoon. I recall a previous visit to this place some years ago when I came here and also saw the ruins of Hampi. I have been touring around the country for the last five years as President and I have visited many of the States, and I imagine many important places, but the country is so vast and the places of interest so many that it is not possible for anyone to visit them all. It is, therefore, a matter of pleasure to me if I am able to visit a particular place, and more so, if I am able to visit it a second time. I want to talk to you today about the progress which India has made in many fields since independence. But my regret is that I cannot talk to you in your own language. I was thinking whether to speak to you in English or in Hindi. I know most of you will understand neither of these languages and will have to depend upon the Kannada translation of my speech. I have decided to speak in English because we found some difficulty in getting an efficient translator of Hindi into Kannada.

You know our Constitution has laid down unanimously and with the consent of all concerned that in fifteen years' time all All-India work will have to be done in Hindi. We have been extremely fortunate in that, most of the difficulties which we thought insoluble before were solved with the consent of all when the Constitution was being drawn up, and the decision about

*Speech at a public meeting at Hospet, 21 June, 1955,

As a result of Partition, we inherited other problems of a very grave nature. Nearly 50 lakhs of people came from West Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind into India. Similarly, from East Bengal more than 30 lakhs of people migrated to India. It has been no easy task to receive such large numbers and to arrange for their immediate relief and rehabilitation. It is difficult for you all here to imagine what the difficulty was in 1947-48 in a place like Delhi. Lakhs and lakhs of people had to be lodged in camps, to be fed, to be looked after for more than a year or two. Even today we have more than a lakh of persons in camps in Bengal. Fortunately, persons who came from the Punjab side have been in a way rehabilitated by now. Perhaps, you do not know that in the Punjab and Sind vast areas of land were irrigated. Sikhs and Hindus owned large tracts of such irrigated land. The Hindus owned large number of factories and workshops. They were highly educated and were leading in all tearned professions. They had a large number of big institutions built and supported by public subscription. Crores worth of property vested in these public institutions. Soon after partition, the Hindus and the Skihs had to come away from Pakistan leaving all this behind. Persons who were millionaires till yesterday suddenly turned into paupers. It has not been possible to restore to such persons all their wealth and property which they enjoyed while they were in Western Pakistan. But what we have succeeded in doing is to settle them in some place or other giving them some land, a house, or other things to carry on their business so that they could earn an honourable living. It is a matter of gratification that the people bore all this suffering with courage and fortitude, and I never saw a man begging alms. If, therefore, we find today that, to a certain extent, the people of West Pakistan have been rehabilitated, it is because they owe it largely to their own efforts and their courage and manliness. We cannot yet say that we havy achieved the same result in the case of persons coming from East Pakistan. There are many reasons for it, one of them being that they came later than those from West Pakistan, and even today, migration from East Bengal has not ceased. During the last few months about 25,000 persons a month have been coming from East Bengal. Government is anxious to solve this problem as well, and for the purpose our Rehabilition Minister

has made Calcutta his headquarters. The Government has already spent more than Rs. 285 crores on relief and rehabilitation and it is determined that it will not allow the work to suffer for want of funds.

Apart from the problem of refugees, we were faced with serious food shortages on the eve of independence. It was the aftermath of the Bengal famine of 1943. The whole country was affected by this problem. We had to import huge quantities of foodgrains from foreign countries. In the South people are not used to taking wheat. We could not get rice, and they had to be content with wheat. Thank God, not one single soul died of starvation due to famine in those years. The difficulty was not only in getting foodgrains from foreign countries but also in distributing them within the country itself. The railways and other means of communication had been so much overstrained during the war that they were not able to cope with the additional traffic involved in the heavy movement of foodgrains from one part of the country to another. But, as I have said earlier, that difficulty was somehow faced and faced successfully.

After independence, the Government was also called upon to lay the foundations of a Welfare State. The first essential of such a State is to see that everyone gets food, clothing and shelter. Everyone is provided with facilities for education and medical relief, and everyone gets the opportunity to rise to the highest he is capable of. With this objective in view several steps were taken. One was the drawing up of a Constitution. Our Constitution enshrines within it the principles of a Welfare State. It guarantees to every citizen liberty of life, liberty of profession, liberty of religion, liberty of speech and every other kind of freedom which a human being needs, irrespective of his religion, sex and age. But it is not enough to put these things on paper. We must provide the necessary facilities to enable everyone to enjoy them. We have, therefore, been preparing a series of plans to make the people's life a bit happier, specially of a poorer sections of the commnnity. Our irrigation and industrial projects are meant to serve the same end. Work on one such project is also being carried on in your midest. I have come here specially to see the progress that it has made. You will be happy to learn that there are many of such projects spread all over the country. We hope people will be benefited immensely when all these projects are completed,

While drawing up our Plans, we have not forgotten the small industries. It is these industries which flourish in the vlilages and which provide employment to millions and billions of men and women who cannot get any other kind of employment. Therefore, while on the one side we are trying to develop the big multipurpose projects and large industries, we are also trying to help, encourage and rehabilitate the small village industries. The Government is also directly participating in the development of some basic industries like iron and steel. At present we produce only about 10 lakh tons of steel. Within the next three or four years we hope to have factories which will give us at least four times as much. Two factories which will produce at least 10 lakh tons are already under construction. A third is under contemplation, and the details are being worked out.

It has been felt that for improved agriculture manure is required. For this purpose a very big factory has been established at Sindri. It produced fertilizers. When the factory started production a little over two years ago, some difficulty was felt in the initial stages in disposing of its produce. Our agriculturists have now understood the value of the fertilizer. Today there is such a big demand for this product that we are going to have at least two or three big factories in the country in the near future.

I told you that our railways suffered terribly during the war period. We had, therefore, to import a large number of engines and wagons. During the last few years, not only have the railways been completely rehabilitated, but they have started manufacturing most of the things which we previously imported from abroad. We have now factories which produce engines and wagons for the broad guage as well as the metre gauge lines. It is hoped that in the near future we will become completely self-sufficient in these lines. While all this has been achieved, we have also been able to lay and open new railway lines.

So you can understand that we have made all-round progress. Our position in the outside world has also improved very largely. We did not have a single representative in any foreign country before 1947. India was suppose to be and was in fact a part of the British Empire, and as such had no independent existence of its own in the eyes of other countries. Since 1947, we have not only our ambassadors all over the world and the ambassadors of other countries in Delhi, but our advice is sought by any countries.

I do not know of any other country which within a period of seven years has risen from a dependent status to such heights in international matters. The foreigners who come and visit this country and go round and see things for themselves are full of praise for us. More than that, the policy of peace that our Prime Minister has been following has been appreciated and approved by all countries. He has been telling the world that is no way of conflict except the way which Mahatma Gandhi taught us. War settles no questions. It creates new problems. What many people do not understand is that preparation for war can never end war. When the first World War was fought it was proclaimed that it was a war to end war. But it only led to the Second World War. The second World War has led to preparation for a third World War, and the Third World War is going to be a total war which threatens annihilation. All those years the scientists and the Governments have been engaged in discovering and perfecting weapons of destruction. Such weapons have reached a stage never dreamt of before. Everybody feels that war should be avoided, but none has the courage to say that it should not be fought and there should be no preparation for it. All countries have been asked to join one camp or the other so that they may get some kind of protection in case of war. But it is forgotten that the countries which depend on others for protection will be the first to be destroyed. Our Prime Minister has had the courage and the foresight to tell the world that this is not the way to prevent war. All countries must realise that the way out of war is to live and let live. His policy was at one time misunderstood. He and our country came in for a lot of misinformed criticism. This has not altogether ceased even now. But there is a better appreciation of the position now. More and more people are beginning to realise that the course he has suggested is the only right course. He is, these days, as you know, in Russia. He is visiting some other countries also, and I have no doubt that when he returns, he will return with a glory which will be a proud heritage for all of us.

Therefore, I request friends who are critical of our Government to think of all these things. Not that our Government has been able to achieve everything it wished to achieve. None is more conscious of its failings than the Government itself. It is fully aware of the thousands of things which it wished to do and

has been unable to do. About many of these things there is no difference of opinion between the Government and its critics. There is no wisdom in ignoring what has been achieved and emphasizing only what has not been achieved. When the history of these times comes to be written, say a hundred years hence, the historian will say that India was able to achieve in seven or eight years what no other country achieved in that short period at any time in history. Above all, we have always to bear in mind that we got our freedom after a long time. It is a very valuable thing we have to preserve and protect it at all cost. Nothing should be done which in any way tends to hamper the growth of the country. My business is to go round the country and tell the people to preserve this freedom and to help people to achieve what they want. The field is open to everyone. Today every citizen of this great country enjoys the opportunity to rise to the greatest heights. I hold the position of President by your choice. There is no reason why any one of you cannot reach that position.

There is no question of North or South, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, or man or woman. It is open to everyone who is born in this country, who is its citizen, to attain any height. But, remember that nothing can be achieved without work. Everyone of you has to work. That work has to be found by yourself It should not be work only for yourself but for the country as a whole. If everyone works for the country as a whole, the net result is that everyone works for himself also, and that is my request to you. Think of the country and be prepared to work for it.

Even at the time when her thought touched Elysian heights and the various systems of Indian philosophy were in the making, the most interesting feature of Indian thought was its diverse pattern based on the fullest freedom of thinking and philosophising. What greater proof can there be of this freedom than that not fewer than half of the six schools of Indian philosophy may be said to be atheistic in nature and that, in each of the remaining three which believe in God, the underlying idea of the Supreme Being is quite different? Nevertheless, this amazing diversity characterising the intellectual and emotional levels of the people never seriously undermined their cultural unity and their beliefs in thing and matters important in everyday life.

We can never be too grateful, therefore, so those who laid the foundations of our early beliefs and concepts with which the complicated pattern of our culture was woven in varying designs and different hues. The great flow of *bhakti* and devotional preaching which originated in Karnataka went a long way in sustaining that pattern.

I wonder if, with the achievement of political and constitutional freedom, it is too much to hope that the constructive genius of the Indian people, which in the past found such varied expression within the country and overseas, will not blossom forth once again to further our age-old ideals of forbearance, love and tolerance. Never before in human history have these ideals come so near tangible reality and practical commonsense as today. Never before in our own history have our cherished beliefs and ideals had to face a greater challenge than they are facing today. Now that the whole thinking world is gradually veering round to our ancient beliefs and faith, we cannot afford to turn our backs on them and discard that which has kept us alive.

There is a tendency in some quarters to relegate culture to a secondary place and to treat it casually as an idle pastime. And when we do think of pulling it out of the limbo of neglect, we tend to go to the other extreme and make light of culture by confusing it with brass bands and jazz music. I do not suggest that culture is so austere that it would not go well with things that please or entertain, but certainly it is wrong to equate it with all those for pantomime and stage shows.

Culture is essentially an expression of the inner urges and cumulative beliefs of a community or nation gathered through

centuries of experience. It is an aspect of the mode of living which links the living generation with the generations gone by. The warp and woof which go to make its texture are not always visible on the surface, but thinking men know the fingers that move the silken cords, the fingers which, transcending time, have ever been busy weaving that texture. In a limited it is true that things of the moment may sometimes claim precedence over cultural matters. That is not necessarily because cultural matters are of secondary consequence but because they are ingrained too deep in human nature to suffer any set-back from temporary lack of attention. On the other hand, things of the moment live mainly on the surface and would cease to exist if the focus of attention were turned away from them. This distinction between the two activities is to the advantage of human society because it rules out any conflict between things of the moment and things of cultural value.

It is the perennial flow of the cultural stream which determines a nation's strength, its character in the wider sense and its capacity to survive. But our claims to a rich culture go ill with the misery and poverty on the surface. If we want our view of our culture and its richness to be understood and appreciated by others, we must establish some kind or harmony between it and its outward expression in our actual living. A healthy cultural tradition and a maladjusted society cannot together Therefore, I have always felt that our collective efforts to reconstruct our society and bring about a new era of plenty and prosperity in India are well worth our while. They will bear fruit only if we draw inspiration from our cultural heritage and seek to mould our lives in keeping with its basic ideals and beliefs.

I consider universities to be the proper places from where these ideas should flow. It is the seats of learning which must see that the arteries of the nation are well supplied with cultural nourishment in an assimilable form. I believe even a rank materialist will not deny the force of ideas. Need I say that ideas have something of a hereditary quality, something which has its roots in the past ? It is for the universities to present them in a form which the common man can understand.

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THE POWER IN YOUR HANDS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

We have already lost two wings on our side, which now constitute Pakistan. But the rest of the country that we have inherited is bigger than what it was at any time under one political rule. We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our ancestors, and even more we owe it to those who will follow us to leave this country more united and more prosperous. In the presence of this great heritage, every other consideration which might divide one part from another should shrink into insignificance. We have drawn up a Constitution, not by any one group or one set of people, but by representatives of the whole country coming from every corner of it. That Constitution assures to every State within the country certain rights which cannot be taken away even by the Centre, and that Constitution assures to every State within the country the right to run its own administration in the best interest of the people within it. With that autonomy on the one hand, there is also the obligation on the other hand for ever State to be prepared and ready to maintain and support the entire Republic. The Constitution does not permit the Central Government to impose its will in matters not in its own jurisdiction on a State, it equally imposes the obligation on the Centre to do whatever is required of it under the Constitution for the good and benefit of the States. Sometimes unfortunate

*Address at citizens' meeting, Coimbatore, August 10, 1960.

happenings in one corner or another are apt to blur our vision; whatever such differences, let us be sure that we are one as a country, one as a nation.

In regard to administrative measures which you as citizens may not approve, you have the right to have them changed. That right is available to you both as against the State Government and the Central Government. You have your State Government and you have the Central Government, and both are composed of men whom you have elected. By electing them, you have given them your confidence and they are carrying out what they consider best in the interests of the country. It is, therefore, necessary that you should realise the strength that you possess and the power that you have in your own hands. That power has to be exercised with caution and with a full knowledge of the responsibilities it imposes.

I have gone into this matter at length because I feel that in some places a tendency is visible which does not appear to me to be right. The Constitution does not permit either the Centre or any of the States to establish any kind of imperialism in this country. You should also realise that those who have fought imperlalism are not likely to resort to it themselves.

I would, therefore, ask you to keep in mind that this country is one and indivisible.

Since I arrived here this morning, I have visited two institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission. It is saints like Sri Ramakrishna who have bound this country together from one end to the other. It is a very pleasant sight to see the Ramakrishna Mission working here, just as pleasant to see the *mathas* established by Sankaracharya functioning in the North today. It is not only Sankaracharya you have given us, the people of the North, but also Ramanujacharya, Ramananda and Vallabhacharya; and it is the teachings and the lives of saints like these which have kept us together all these centuries. To this heritage political unity has now been added. It should be our foremost duty to maintain this unity for ever.

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PRESERVING OUR SECURITY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I am visiting Salem after twenty-five years. This period has been a most remarkable period in India's history. When I visited this town in 1935, we were in the midst of our struggle for freedem. We were trying our best to prepare the country for the final non-violent struggle against the British rule.

While we were all full of hope that one day our efforts would succeed, none of us could be sure when that happy consummation would take place. Only two or three years later we saw the beginning of the second World War which later brought about tremendous changes. Soon after the cessation of the war came negotiations between India and Great Britain and ultimately we succeeded in winning our freedom in 1947. Representatives from every part of the country then assembled to draw up a Constitution. The British had brought under their sway a large portion of the country which was directly administered by them Still, one-third of the country was not under the direct administrative control of the British. By the wisdom, statesmanship and firm action of Sardar Patel, even those portions which were under the administrative control of the Indian princes became integrated with India. In 1950 when we declared ourselves a republic the whole country had become integrated under one Constitution and under one administrative control.

The fundamental fact of the Constitution is that we have a

*Speech at citizen' meeting, Salem, August 11, 1960.

Government which is the elected Government of the people and it is within the competence and power of the people to dictate their wishes to the Government. I, therefore, do not need to plead that there shall be no criticism. Without criticism the Government is apt to go wrong. But in criticising the measures and policies of the Government, let us make sure that the unity and security of the country are the first demands on all of us. Once that is assured, the rest can be left to the good sense and power of the people. This is the only way in which democracy can work. We are in a sense fresh to this democracy and, therefore, we are apt sometimes to magnify things which do not need or deserve magnification, We ought always to bear in mind that whatever criticism we may make must be subject to the paramount necessity of keeping the country secure and keeping it free.

Our part history and our present position in the world, no less than what is happening all around us, demand that we should be cautious and vigilant about our freedom and security. Throughout our long history, we would never have been defeated by foreign aggressors or foreign invaders if they had not been able to secure the support of some of our own people. It is one section of our own people who with the aid of foreigners defeated another section of our people and thus enabled the foreigner to establish his rule here. Such a narrow motive which has subjected the country to foreign domination more than once should be guarded against. Let us develop in our minds and hearts love for the country as a whole. Any harm done to any corner of the country should be regarded as harm done to the country as a whole. Now that for the first time we have one administration and one rule throughout the country. let us be ready to sacrifice, if necessary, the interest of an individual or a group for the interest of the country as a whole. Only if we realise the importance of this duty shall we have justified our right to rule ourselves.

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WE MUST HOLD TOGETHER*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It is rarely that I address legislators except those who sit in Parliament. Under the Constitution, I am required to address them at least once every year and that I do. But, as you all know, my address is mine only in name and I do not get any other opportunity to address legislators even in Delhi. I am, therefore, thankful that you have given me this opportunity of having not exactly a speech but a sort of heart-to-heart talk on some matters which appear to me to be of paramount importance at the present moment.

It is only thirteen years ago that we attained independence. Three years later we declared ourselves a republic. Within those two to three years we were able to frame a Constitution which covers the whole of the country. The British left the country in a very much divided condition. Apart from the great problem of Pakistan and the division of India on that account, we had more than 500 States, each run by its own ruler in his own way. It must be said that most of these rulers decided even before independence to join India and one or two who stayed out for the time being also came in later. The result was that we were able to draft a Constitution which covered not only that part of the country which was formerly under direct British rule, but also those areas which were under the Indian princes. And so when we got a Constitution, we divided the whole country into a number of States. Later on there have been changes with regard

*Address to legislators of Madras State, Madras, 13 August 1960.

to the boundry of these States, and now I do not think there is any States which can be said to be entirely a descendant of one of the former Indian States. Either they have been broken up and joined to different States or they have joined to themselves some other portions of other States. In this way we have succeeded in bringing the country under one Constitution, under one rule. There is one Parliament whose writ runs throughout the country. There is one Central Government whith has authority and jurisdiction over many subjects with regard to the whole country. Of course the States are autonomous in many respects. They have exclusive jurisdiction in many points of great importance. But, on the whole, the country is now run as one State and you can call it a Unitary State or a Unitary Federal State or a Federal Unitary State, or whatever you may like to call it. We have achieved something which had never been achieved before by any ruler of this country. We had emperors like Ashoka who had a great part of the country under their dominion. We had also the Mughal emperors. But none of them could claim that their rule extended over the whole country. What happened was that there were local rulers who owned allegiance to them and each expressed his allegiance in some form or other by paying tribute which in most cases was nominal. According to the Hindu custom, a *raja* whose writ could go through the whole country without obstruction was called a *chakravarti*. His *chakra* could go throughout the country without obstruction. The Mughals also had their own *subas* or divisions where *subedars* were more or less independent of the Central Government and only nominally owed allegiance to it.

It is for the first time now that we have this political unity. Of course we have had a history in which the geopraphical entity known as India has been recognised as distinct, right from the Himalayas down to the Cape, bounded on both sides, the east and the west, by the sea. This chunk of territory has always been regarded as one indivisible country although there have been seperate States within it, but culturally and also by religion the whole country was one. Later, when other religions came, even then the country as a whole did not cease to be one entity. It continued to be one country, but not politically. Now that same cultural unity has the added advantage of the being reinforced by political and administrative unity. Therefore, the field of our

activity is much vaster than it has been at any time before. The opportunities are also much greater. The responsibilities too are correspondingly greater. We owe a great responsibility to ourselves, to our ancestors and, even more, to those who will follow us, and that is to maintain and strengthen this unity so that there may be no danger to it at any time. There are dangers from outside and there may be dangers from inside also. Our own fissiparous tendencies have to be conquered which manifest themselves, on the slightest occasion, without sufficient provocation, causing anxiety to all lovers of the country. Some kind of difference between one group and another creates trouble, which is far more serious than it really looks if we examine the cause and the motive behind it. While we have no reason to be pessimistic, we should be cautious and careful. We should not grow complacent or believe that having succeeded in winning freedom we are safe to do whatever we like. It is up to every one of us, to whatever part of the country we may belong, to be always cautious and careful in our words and deeds and in our attitude towards others, whether they are close to us, or next-door neighbours or distant brothers, living, say, one or two thousand miles away.

Mention was made of the eartequake of Bihar twenty-five years ago. That was a very great calamity for a small part of the country. But I was really happy at the sympathy it evoked throughout the country. It was my good fortune to receive donations in money and in kind from each corner of the country for the relief of the sufferers there. That heartened me, and that held out to me the hope that we had begun to realise the organic unity of the country. Whether it is a matter of joy or of sorrow, we should all be happy or sorrowful together. Unless we develop that kind of genuine sympathy and love for the country as a whole, things are bound to occur which will upset us now and then. It is only a firm realisation of fellow-feeling and oneness of the different parts of the country which will enable us to keep our heads cool when trouble arises here or there, by some mistake, by some chance or by the folly or misdeed of someone.

We have had plans of development and these plans are expected to bear fruit and benefit different parts of the country. Of course it cannot be said that each part of the country, each

little corner, is benefited by each plan. That is not possible. But the idea is to reach as many places as possible, go as far as possible, through successive plans. The plans are expected to raise our standard to living and we are all hoping that we shall be able to see the results better and more fully as time passes. Even as it is, I do not think there is any reason to be pessimistic or to be apologetic about these plans. We have had good success as far as we have gone and we have not yet achieved full results because it takes some time for these plans to bear fruit. We are getting some fruits but not all the fruits. There are of course difficulties. But we are on the road and we shall move forward with all the experience which we are gaining and with all the knowledge which we are getting from other countries.

What I wish to emphasise, however, is that with all this material prosperity we shall not be able to make our people quite happy. In this country at any rate we learnt long ago that happiness does not consist only in getting more material wealth and more material possessions. It is something beyond all these and above these. In spite of poverty and in spite of all the sufferings which our people have had to undergo, they have never lost hope or faith. They have always had a smile on their faces. Even the poorest man, who does not have much clothing on the body, still wears a smile on his face. That is because he has been brought up in an atmosphere of feeling contented with what he has, and so long as we continue to possess that great quality of remaining contented and remaining happy even if we are in trouble, we shall be able to make more and more progress.

Of course it is said on the other side that this kind of contentment only lands to misery and poverty. But I do not personally believe that. I do not feel that misery consists in poverty. Misery consists in what we feel. With the feeling that we have done our best and must now endure whatever comes, we shall be able to make ourselves happy even if we are in difficulty. Not that we should remain in poverty and destitution. We wish to progress materially; we wish to have more and more of the good things of the world; but side by side with these things, I think we should not neglect and ignore the fundamental teaching of our culture and religion, whether it is Islamic religion or the Christian religion or the Hindu religion. It is up to us, especially to those of you who are occupying the position of representatives of the people, to carry to them this message.

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STOP THE FORCES OF DISRUPTION*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

We feel gratified to see the ever-increasing tempo of nation-building activity which we all agree is fast changing the face of our country, particularly the shape of things in rural India. Our industrial and agricultural output is going up year fulfilling the targets set in our Five Year Plans for the development of our national resources. The foundations are being laid and we can look forward with hope and confidence to the progressive realisation of the aims and objectives of our Plans.

I do not, however, purpose to dwell on this aspect of our reconstruction activity, however, pleasant and gratifying it may be. I would rather assign myself the unpleasant task of referring today to certain unfortunate trends in India which have occasioned second thoughts in the minds of many patriotic Indians regarding the future happiness and prosperity of our country. These trends, unless they are checked betimes, have the potentiality of setting at naught the great strides that we have been lately taking in the field of industry and other nation-building activities. It should, therefore, be the foremost duty of every well-wisher of our country to stop the march of these fissiparous forces so that the freedom that we have attained after centuries of foreign domination and the opportunities that have come our way to reorient our economy and social structure are not frittered away.

Let me, therefore, stress today the need to strengthen the forces of unity in the country by eliminating all causes of friction through goodwill, understanding and mutual accommodation.

*Address to the nation on Independence Day, Madras, 15 August 1960,

We have witnessed in the recent past certain unfortunate happenings, the very referenee to which makes me sad beyond words. Whatever their background or the predisposing causes or the immediate provocation, there can be no excuse for letting tension and ill-will get the better of our reason and judgment and our feeling of nationalism. Such happenings tend to encourage feelings of exclusiveness and bitterness which threaten the very unity of the country. Whether it is a question of religion or of language or of any other aspect of our life or activity, resorting to violence is indefensible. Let us understand that it is also profitless. I would appeal to all my countrymen to have a broad vision and not to lose their sense of perspective. Given the right perspective and mutual forbearance, I am quite sure such ugly situations as we have had the misfortune of witnessing in certain parts of India, will never recur. The existing tension and risks at our frontiers ought to strengthen our will to unity within.

I know it is not usual to speak in this tone on Independence Day. If I have done so it should be taken as a measure of our earnestness to set things right and my personal keenness that the trends I have referred to are checked before it is too late.

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HINDU MUSLIM QUESTION

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The Hindu-Muslim question began to agitate our minds. I pondered long and deeply over it. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered at the inability of people to comprehend certain basic factors which were so clear for all to see and the more was I convinced that Gandhiji's appeal for mutual love and respect as well as a non-violent approach was the only lasting solution to the problem besetting us.

Muslims might have come to this country from outside and added to their numbers, but they are as much Indians as Hindus are and there is no other country for them. While, they may sympathise with Muslims living in other countries and on certain issues may side with Muslims of other lands, it cannot be denied that they will have to live and die in India, that they have to enioy and suffer here. While the Hindu is cremated, the Muslim needs some space for himself even after death—a few feet of land for himself permanently. So Muslims belong to this country and are its citizens. When it is admitted they are not foreigners, it follows that they have the same rights and privileges in the country as other communities and they should have a share in everything along with others. Their political rights cannot be ignored as the denial of this fact will only mean that we want to deprive them of their just rights and to suppress them.

Of course, what I have said applies to other religions and communities too. In a country where the people profess so many religions and speak so many tongues, peace and mutual regard can

never prevail without unity. Otherwise one of the communities will suppress and subjugate the others. The suppressed will ever continue to strive to rise. They will neither remain at peace not let others be peaceful. The clash of interests might lead to civil war and if that occurred it would be no tribute to our wisedom and foresight. It would be a matter for shame and sorrow and we would be exposed to ridicule if even after seeing the great carnage of the World War, we did not learn a lesson. At the very beginning of the movement, Gandhiji had laid great stress on non-violence which a country like India needed most.

While it is very difficult to apply *ahimsa* in life, only those who do not appreciate its strength ridicule it. People say that *ahimsa* makes cowards of men and that no country can defend its freedom with *ahimsa*. They point out that no country has so far accepted it as a national policy. Let alone the common people, when even the wise and the disciplined cannot control their anger, which is after all the cause of violence, how can *ahimsa* be practicable—so they argue.

It is not usually remembered that it is in violence that cowardice lies and not in non-violence. If one is afraid of one's adversary and desists from harming him, that is not non-violence. One who desists out of fear would unhesitatingly attack his adversary if he gets the later at a disadvantage or if he gets help from outside. Only he can be called non-violent who be he strong or weak, desists from causing hurt to others because of his belief that it is wrong to hurt others. This belief, abviously, is not related to his capacity for doing harm. Even if he is not in a position to cause injury to his adversary but does not injure, not out of fear or a realisation of his weakness, but out of a conviction that it is wrong to injure, his action may still be non-violent. Much more so if he has strength and refrains because of his faith. As a natural corollary, the believer in non-violence must also have the capacity to bear suffering inflicted on him by his adversary. If he puts up with an injustice because of the belief that otherwise his adversary would cause him greater suffering, then his act is cowardly, not non-violent.

Non-violence lies in doing what one considers right and just and in doing one's duty fearlessly, regardless of the consequences and of the suffering which the adversary may inflict on one. The non-violent man will always remain steadfast without deflecting

from the path of duty. He would not use force even in excitement. But such behaviour is possible only when one is convinced of the justice of one's cause. Ultimately, it is the non-violent man who wins.

To those who may doubt the possibility of creating this kind of courage and capacity to bear suffering in men, particularly among common people, I would say this : even ordinary men who are not capable of displaying fortitude, courage and bravery in day-to-day life perform in the field of battle unhead of feats of bravery and gallantry. Just as practice and concentrated effort have imparted courage to the fighter in the field, so also practice and concentrated effort can produce in truly non-violent 'warior'. Only, the courage of the fighter may also be born of fear ; fear of army discipline, fear of death of the hands of the enemy. The soldier may find himself in a position no better than that of Mareech in the Ramayan, of whom Tulsidas said : 'He cast his eyes on both sides and found death awaiting him." On such occasions, bravery is instinctive. But training and discipline are always good aids and induce the brave man to be courageous and heroic.

The idea is not contradictory. The courage of the Satyagrahi is born of conviction. There is no element of fear in it. It is a higher and noble type of courage and can be cultivated through training and discipline.

While in the army, daily parades and exercise constitute the practice, the basis of non-violent practice is, in one word, self-control. This control is gained by strictly following the rules of conduct enjoined on one by all the religions and by restraining the senses. Gandhiji has said that unshakable faith in God is of great help in producing a non-violent 'warrior'. If developed from childhood, fearlessness and other attendant qualities of non-violence can easily be inclucated in a person.

There was a time when every country had a separate class of professional warriors. In India, fighting was the prerogative of the Kshatriyas. The British Government also had classified certain castes. But the total war of the modern day put an end to all that. Anybody could fight if he was given proper training. In India, too, the old restrictions were relaxed during the last war and people were recruited from communities which were hitherto considered non-martial. But an army of non-violent men can be

raised on a still wider basis of recruitment. There is no room in the ordinary army for the old, or for most of the women and children. But in the non-violent army, there is room for everyone, even for the blind and the physically handicapped. This is because the desideratum is not physical prowess but mental strength and spiritual force.

The peculiarity of non-violent struggle is that the non-violent "warrior" invites suffering on himself instead of inflicting it on his adversary. His object is not to attain his end by harming the adversary but by rousing sympathetic regard in the adversary through his own love and suffering. Whereas in violent struggle, but sides are faced with suffering, in non-violent struggle, only one side takes all the suffering on itself. The suffering is thus straightway halved; in fact, it is even much less because with a person who is determined not to use force, the hands of the adversary grow weak and his weapons get blunted. It is anger which gives strength to one's arms, and anger is easily born as a reaction to violent rather than to non-violent behaviour. Total suffering, therefore, is much less in the case of non-violence.

While in modern warfare we hear of newer weapons being invented with every passing dav, no material weapons are needed for non-violent action. During the last war hundreds of millions were spent per day, and there was no end to calamities and suffering. It is impossible to have an accurate estimate of the total suffering caused to each country during the war. In non-violent action, there is no dislocation of everyday life, monetary expense is much less and casualties are much lower. Thus, even a poor country can afford to resort to non-violent-resistance against the most powerful of nations.

So far I have spoken about the importance of non-violence in international affairs. Turning to internal affairs, if violence is resorted to in a country inhabited by people of different religions, language and views that country will not find peace even for one day. In India, if various sections of the people do not show cordiality and tolerance towards each other and stress only each one's rights and concentrate on those rights being accepted by the others forgetting each one's duties to the others, it can result only in tension and bloodshed. In individuals, the tendency to violence can be curbed by the police and the administration, but when violence spreads to a whole people living in various parts of the

country, the administration breaks down. Such clashes would only result in civil war. There is, therefore, no way out for countries like India but to have faith in non-violence.

There is one point worth remembering. When we say we cannot expect a common man to behave non-violently in the face of incitement, we are apt to forget that, in the daily life of an individual or a group, we see that, except in a few cases, man is generally inclined to be non-violent. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, man carries on peacefully—in non-violence. Is it not possible then to carry on in the remaining one case also without resort to violence ? We have to make a special effort to achieve this, because till we do so we can hardly claim to be better than beasts.

The terrible and destructive Second World War has set the people thinking. They realise now that, if periodic carnage and large-scale destruction are to be avoided, and humanity and civilisation saved, man will have to think hard to find a way out so that children are not brought up only to be killed and wealth is not produced only to be destroyed. I am sorry to see that many of my countrymen, even Congress workers, who have been maintaining non-violence throughout in their service to the country, are now losing faith in the sacred creed of non-violence.

Many can be callous enough to say that Hindu-Muslim unity should have physical force as its basis and not mutual goodwill. That means they think one of the two communities should be suppressed by force. Some Muslims think that they kept the whole of India under subjugation for centuries when their number was much smaller and that they can do the same thing again. On the other hand, there are Hindus who say that the days when the Muslims dominated are gone for ever. At that time the Hinnus were not wide awake but now they are not only in a majority but are more educated, wealthier and more powerful. The country, they say, belongs to the Hindus; others are unimportant minorities who should be content with fair treatment.

Both the schools of thought rely only on Physical force. They turn their backs on non-violence which alone can solve the tangle. Violence breeds only violence. If we think that the Hindu-Muslim question can be solved by violence, it will only mean more violence and the ultimate destruction of both communities. Only a policy of live and let live, mutual goodwill and respect, and non-violent

behavior can solve the problem and usher in an era of Hindu-Muslim unity.

We should have faith in truth and justice and adopt the creed of non-violence for ever. It is possible that such a policy may not bring quick results or its success may not be visible at all places. But if our actions are based on self-confidence, truth and genuine courage and not fear or cowardice, our success is absolutely certain.

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CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME : SOME SUGGESTIONS

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The thirteen-fold constructive programme, which Gandhiji placed before us in *Harijan* of 18th August, 1940, and which he has again stressed in his recent pamphlet entitled *Constructive Programme, Its Meaning and Place*, demands detailed instructions so that workers may know how to give effect to it. I trust the following ways and means that I am venturing to place before them will provide some guidance.

I. HINDU-MUSLIM OR COMMUNAL UNITY

It may at once be admitted that the present communal disunity is due to mutual distrust and suspicion. It has so vitiated national life that suspicion of each other's motives has crept into spheres of religious performances, language, culture, mode of life, education, economic freedom and political power—in fact, into every sphere of life.

Mutual trust will be automatically established only if we renounce the use of force under all circumstances for enforcing what we consider our right or preventing the abuse of what the opponent considers his right. The following illustrations of occasions on which trouble ordinarily arises will explain how in my opinion, non-violence may be effectively employed.

(i) A Muslim wants to sacrifice a cow or slaughter it for

food. A Hindu will try to dissuade him from carrying out his wish by friendly argument and by appealing to him not to offend Hindu sentiments. In no circumstances will he or a group of Hindus resort to violence to prevent the act.

(ii) Similarly, if a Hindu takes out the image of Durga in procession before a mosque and the Muslim is even disturbed during his prayer time by the music, the latter may not use force but will try his level best to dissuade the Hindu by entreaty.

(iii) If either a Muslim or a Hindu wishes to build a mosque or dedicate a temple to an image on his own land, either should recognize the right of the other.

(iv) If the Azan of the Muslim of the Arati of the Hindu disturbs either party, the temporary inconvenience must be borne with due regard to each other's feelings.

(v) To preach and propagate one's religion is the right of everyone. But in exercising the right the utmost care must be taken nor to hurt the feelings of those belonging to other faiths by decrying their creeds of their founders or revered saints.

(vi) Conversion of a person from one faith to another is a common source of rousing bitter feelings of revenge. This should not be.

(vii) In the matter of kidnapping the members of the offending community should consider it a point of honour with them to bring the guilty to book.

(viii) Other illustrations may be given of occasions which lead to violence between the parties concerned. Violence should be eschewed under all circumstances. If friendly persuasion fails, resort can always be had to arbitration by an impartial person or persons acceptable to both parties. If one party refuses to have arbitration, the non-violent method of protest through self-suffering may be used in order to melt the opponent's heart, provided it is a clear case and the person concerned is strong enough to resist the evil in this way. If a non-violent protest is impossible, justice may even be sought in law courts or from other constituted authority. What applies to Hindus and Muslims applies equally to all

communities.

(ix) Of late much bad blood seems to be caused by what are said to be attacks on the culture of a particular community by another. This may not cause riots, but it is no less serious, for it spreads the poison in an insidious manner. Then, too, there is such a thing as an insidious force which a majority may use constantly against a minority. Conversely, a minority may exercise disproportionate on account of its wealth, physical strength or even because of the cowardice of others. In all these cases it should be the constant endeavour of all to try to set at rest the doubts and suspicions of others by their own lives and prove from their day-to-day activity that no harm is intended and that all are free to live and think as they like. Thus, for example, there should be perfect freedom for everyone regarding language, regarding the education of children and the ordering of their lives.

(x) In the matter of trades and professions there should not be unhealthy rivalry or jealousy. No trade or profession may be said to be the exclusive right of any one community. Everyone should be free to carry on the trade or profession he likes. If in any big concern, shop or factory the owner employs members of his own community, it should not be made a bone of contention.

(xi) Political power perhaps furnishes the most subtle and devastating causes for mutual distrust and suspicion. Every community should cast out once and for all the desire or ambition to rule over others. India has so many communities that it is impossible to have peace and prosperity if any one of them tries to establish its supremacy. It should be the duty of members of one community to seek and utilize every opportunity of doing a good turn to members of other communities. Generosity and justice need not be contradictory terms. Generosity is, in fact, a potent force in removing mistrust and ill-will. Cowardice and fear should have no place in our dealings. It is for political parties to devise ways and means of a political nature for bridging the present gulf, but individual workers can make an enormous contribution

by setting an example of tolerance and patience in the face of the utmost provocation. It should be within the bounds of possibility for everyone to cultivate intimate friendship with at least one member of the other community. It is such small seeds well sown that will grow into fruitful trees. One golden rule to be scrupulously observed is not to judge others. It is always best to turn the searchlight inwards and lay one's finger on one's own weakness and shortcomings. It follows, therefore, that in times of communal strife members of each community should try to set right their own thoughts and actions and those of their own community and leave the other community to its own members. Statements hastily issued to the press, inaccuracy in facts, imputation of motives, and retaliation create bad blood and make reconciliation difficult. Truth must be brought to light, but statements and counter-statements often aggravate rather than mitigate ill-will.

(xii) The organization of bands of men and women imbued with the spirit of non-violence and willing to lay down their lives, if necessary, is most desirable both from the point of view of preventing and of controlling communal riots. Every volunteer of such a *Shanti Dal* must undergo a period of training. The task is difficult one and requires courage and faith of the highest order. Fitness for such work can best come from long apprenticeship in the service of all communities. Whenever and wherever possible, members of one community should make it a point of living among and serving members of other communities. This would open the way to intimate social contacts and create mutual understanding. Indeeed, such workers will not only be able to prevent riots but will also be able to stop their spread, for they will be beloved of the people.

(xiii) A standing committee of members of all communities for every town and group of villages commanding the confidence of the people would be of great help and might well serve as a board of arbitration in cases of dispute.

II. THE REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability is a most ugly manifestation of 'himsa' in our social life. It is not less reprehensible because it has the sanction of long continued and more of less universal usage amongst the Hindus. It is a definite form of cruelty which has-been falsely sanctified as a religious institution. So deep is the canker that even among the so-called untouchables one section observes and practises it against another in spite of the fact that all of them are so treated by the so-called higher castes. But whatever the causes and origion of this evil custom it has to be removed, root and branch, if, as Gandhiji has often and so aptly said, Hinduism is to live.

Untouchability, as it is practised in different parts of India, has varying grades. The so-called untouchables have been relegated to the performance of certain tasks or professions which are considered dirty by the higher castes. Their dwellings, generally hovels, are segregated from those of others. Access to temples, educational institutions, wells and tanks, hotels, restaurants and even public conveyances is denied to them. They are, therefore, backward in education, exteremely poor and mostly landless.

It is necessary to give a true picture of their disabilities and difficulties so that workers may realize the immediate importance and significance of the steps suggested for the removal of this terrible blot on society.

Grades of Untouchability

(i) In some parts of the country the very sight of a Harijan by a Caste Hindu after a bath, at meal time or when proceeding to the temple is considered to be pollution. The wretched Harijan is sometimes required to cry out and warn people of his approach, as lepers are reported to have done in olden times.

(ii) He is banned from walking on certain streets and has to keep a certain distance from the Caste Hindus. He may not sit on the same bench or carpet. He may not enter the house. Even an outer verandah is forbidden to him. Anything he touches is polluted. He may never come

in the proximity of a kitchen. He may not draw water from a well which Caste Hindus use; he may not even take water from the some tank. The services of a barber are denied to him. In same places he may not dress as others do; his womenfolk may not wear ornaments; he is not allowed to enjoy the same kind of festivities as other Hindus on occasions of marriage, birth or death.

(iii) Apart from not being allowed to enter a temple he may not, in certain places, even walk on the streer near it or bathe in sacred tanks or rivers where Caste Hindus bathe in. He may not read the scriptures. He is neither served by the same priest who serves other castes; nor does the same priest officiate in the untouchable's house on occasions like birth, death or marriage.

Practical Suggestions

(i) The worker has, first of all, to cast out un-touchability from his own life. He must free his mind of all sense of high and low on account of birth or profession or calling. He may not refuse to sit on the same bench or bed or carpet as an untouchable. Physical contact in serving Harijans may not repel him. He should try to have a Harijan in his home as a member of the family, even though he may be used for domestic work. He shall not observe un-touchability in the matter of food or drink provided these are clean. This does not of course mean eating out of the same plate or drinking out of the same tumbler. These are insanitary habits which should be avoided even with one's own kith and kin. It is probable that the worker will have great opposition from his family members and friends in carrying out these reforms, but he will have bravely to face this without anger and ill-will. Having become a convert himself he will not force his view on others, not even on his family members. He will try to make all he comes in contact with of his way of thinking, by reasoning and persuasion and most of all by the purity and dedication to service of his own life.

(ii) Having shed untouchability in his own life it will be right

for him to appeal to his neighbours to allow Harijans to draw water from wells and bathe in tanks and rivers where others bathe and wash. He will plead with the school authorities and parents of Caste Hindu children admit Harijan children to schools. In fact he will help to remove all their disabilities. Perhaps the most difficult citadel to storm and conquer will be the priests and temple-goers. But ceaseless propaganda for this and other reforms is an essential part of the programme. Help may, where possible, be sought from legislation and low courts, and there will probably be cases or occasions when Satyagraha may have to be offered on behalf of this section of suffering humanity.

(iii) So much for reforming the Caste Hindu mind. But equally importance is the work of educating and reforming the Harijans themselves. Ages of suppression have dealt hardly with them. Apart from the inferiority complex from which they suffer they have become addicted to certain habits, e.g., carrion-eating, which must be eradicated. They must be taught to give up the practice of untouchability amongst themselves; they have to be made to look upon their work of scavenging as an honourable task, not to be despised; they should be educated in personal hygiene and taught the value and necessity of clean living. The worker will not hesitate to do scavenging himself and thereby show the Harijans not only the dignity of all labour but also prove that it is possible to scavenge and yet live cleanly. The work of sweepers is made for more disagreeable by the carelessness and dirty habits of the average person. The people in the worker's area should be appealed to and taught how to use latrines and drains properly. Trench latrines may be introduced where possible, and people should be taught to cover excreta properly with clean earth. *Ashrams* where the inmates do their own scavenging contribute greatly—even though in an indirect manner—towards the removal of untouchability. Caste Hindus should have no objection to taking up the tanning industry and thereby raise its status and help the Harijans to do that work cleanly and in the most

beneficial manner. Drink and gambling are habits which have taken a hold of Harijans. There is ample room for reform among them in these spheres.

It is only by assiduous and untiring labour in these three spheres, viz., removal of the sin of untouchability in one's own life, propaganda for its removal among the so-called higher castes, and service of the Harijans themselves, that the problem can be successfully tackled.

(iv) I have not considered it necessary here to deal of detail with the political rights and duties of this community. Needless to say they are entitled to them every whit as much as anyone else.

(v) Attempts are often made to provide separate wells, schools and hostels for Harijans and even separate temples. Far from befriending them this really trends to perpetuate their separateness and should not, therefore, be ordinarily encouraged. But they may only be resorted to as a temporary measure where the Harijans are definitely suffering physical hardship in the absence of any facility.

There is another problem which is of a similar kind and needs a band of workers with enthusiasm and devotion to tackle it. India has a large population of what are known as *Adibasis* or aboriginals residing in different parts of the country—concentrated largely in jungles and hilly tracts. They are backward in education, and their economic condition is also deplorable. Christian missionaries have done good educational work amongst them, but there is much that remains to be done. They have been neglected by us, and work of education and general uplift amongst them is necessary. It has to be undertaken on a large scale and has to be more or less on the same lines as that among the Harijans.

III. PROHIBITION

The evils resulting from drink and drugs need not be detailed Suffice it to say that the addict to these is not only physically ruined but also becomes a moral degenerate.

Considerable literature on the evils of alcoholism and drugs

is available. It should be obtained and studied by those who feel the urge to work amongst this type of fallen humanity. But far more useful than knowledge derived from books will be the personal contracts with the victims, which it should be the duty of the worker to make. They stand in dire need of befriending and uplifting. Their life and surroundings, the miseries wrought among families, the starvation and gloom that reign in their homes are the best material for propaganda whether for organizations or individual workers. Propaganda may take the form of magic lantern slides or cinema pictures which will show the evil consequences of drink on the health of the addict, how each organ of his body deteriorates, how the nervous system cracks, and how he loses all self-control and becomes not only a physical but a moral wreck, how his family starves. Stories from life showing the contrast between the life and home of a drunkard and that of a teetotaller may be related or shown on the movies to bring home the evil to the victim.

Practical ways of weaning them from the habit are to provide them with innocent drinks, to open clubs for them where they may play games and indulge in healthful recreation, and generally to befriend them during their leisure hours. No doubt such work will need funds and can best be carried out by organizations, but the individual worker can do a great deal if he visits the homes of the addicts and tries to win their confidence.

IV. KHADI

Khadi has been in a public eye since Gandhiji's return home from South Africa. So much has been written about it and so much work too has been done in connection with it that it is not necessary to dilate at length on its necessity and potentiality.

The movement for the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and other subsidiary processes is based on two fundamental facts of Indian life. 80 per cent of India's population is either engaged in or dependent on agriculture, but inasmuch as agriculture does not occupy the entire time of the agriculturist, he has plenty of leisure to spare which might will be devoted to a supplementary occupation. Spinning and weaving not only supply this need, not only solve the problem of clothing the villager, but also make a substantial addition to his slender

resources. It has never been suggested that those who can earn more in any other occupation should give up their work and take to spinning. It is pre-eminently a supplementary industry.

Khadi may be produced for sale as also for use by the producer himself. The khadi produced for sale is for those who do not spin themselves. Efforts have been made to improve the tools of production in order to produce better and finer yarn. The results are astonishing. The improvement in the texture of khadi, to say nothing of the variety now available, as compared with the first efforts of 22 years ago is there for all to see. The most fastidious tastes can be satisfied. But khadi cannot, indeed it is not meant to, compete with mill ctoth. It should be purchased and used to the exclusion of all other cloth, regardless of its higher cost, by those who love the villager and stand for India's freedom. The A. I. S. A. has opened several production and sale centres, and each worker has to become a self-appointed agent for all such. He should study the economics and ethics of khadi thoroughly so that he may be able effectually to carry its message a salvation and uplift to ever home. By creating a love of and demand for khadi in his locality he will lessen the difficuly experienced by many *bhandars* of accumulated stocks and consequent locking up of capital.

One warning is necessary in the sphere of sales. The main object of the movement is to help the poorest and humblest among us and enable them to earn an honest living through an honourable occupation. It follows that genuine khadi is only that which subserves and fulfils this purpose. To that end the A.I.S.A., in complete contrast to all Employers' Associations, decided unasked by the spinners to try as soon as possible to give them a minimum wage of 8 *annns* per day of 8 hours' work. The ideal has not yet been attained, but an immediate rise of 3 *annas* per day from the former 1 *anna* was given a few years ago, and khadi sales, as was feared at first by many workers, have not suffered owing to the consequent rise in its price. But exploitation of the poor spinners and weavers still continues by many who would do so for personal gain. In spite of the A.I.S.A.'s resolve to give certificates only to those individuals or institutions that sell khadi after giving the minimum wage to the workers, there are many who take a mean advantage of the extreme poverty of the spinners and weavers and by paying them a pittance sell hand-woven and

hand-spun at cheaper rates. It is the workers' duty to warn everyone against buying such uncertified khadi.

But while khadi production for sale must continue to be properly organized, hand-spun and hand-woven can become universal only if its utility in national economy is brought home to the people at large and they take to spinning. A spinner with average skill can spin about 400 yards in an hour, which means 12,000 yards a month if he spins an hour a day. Of course, the fineness of the yarn depends on the quality of the silvers and the skill of the spinner. But if we take the average count to be 10 to 12, 12,000 yards of yarn will yield about 4 square yards of khadi. A person can, therefore, spin enough yarn to give himself 48 square yards of cloth in a year with only an hour's spinning a day. The average consumption of cloth in our country is not more than 16 yards per head. An average spinner can thus produce enough cloth for 3 persons. It is perfectly easy for the agriculturist as well as those engaged in the so-called liberal professions to spare an hour every day for spinning. The national gain will be enormous. 16 yards of mill cloth cost at least Rs. 4. An addition of even Rs. 4 per head per annum to the slender resources of our people is a definite material gain, to say nothing of the corporate and moral benefit acquired through self-sufficiency in the matter of clothing. In a family of five, if two persons spin regularly for one hour every day, they can clothe the entire family.

Every worker should spin enough for his own requirements. He should be an efficient spinner on the *charkha*, the *dhanush-takli* and the *takli*. He should have a thorough knowledge of all the processes prior to spinning—picking, cleaning, ginning, carding, slivering—and spinning. He should know how to mend the wheel and the *dhanush-takli* if anything goes wrong with them. All his tools should always be clean and in good order. By his aptness, keenness, intimate knowledge of his work, and personal example he will be able to draw people to khadi as no amount of propaganda and argument can. He should have knowledge of the art of weaving also. He may leave the work of spinning for wages to be organized by the A.I.S.A. His main work should be to organize spinning from the point of view of self-sufficiency. No capital is required for this purpose. All that is required in the worker in addition to the above qualifications is skill in imparting his knowledge to others. Each worker may make a plan according to his

circumstances and the conditions of his locality. If he were to resolve to make 12 persons self-sufficient in khadi in six months and as efficient and keen spinners as himself, he will have done a great deal towards inducing others to take to it. There is hardly a village where cotton is not grown or where it cannot be had on payment. As a matter of fact every agriculturist should be persuaded to grow enough cotton to serve his personal requirements. There is again hardly a locality where there are no weavers perishing for want of employment. All this soil is ready for the worker to till and cultivate. Faith, zeal, intelligence and efficiency in the art of khadi-making alone are required for revolutionizing the entire face of village life.

V. OTHER VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

Village industry par excellence is obviously agriculture, for it provides us with all the articles of food as also the raw material for clothing. But here industry has a technical meaning. The better word, perhaps, is handicrafts. It is the decay of handicrafts in our villages that has been the cause of their ruin and made agriculture itself uninteresting and even unprofitable. For, the agriculturist is idle for parctically, if not more than, half the year.

We have seen under the caption of khadi how usefully hand-spining and hand-weaving can occupy the leisure hours of the agriculturist. We will now consider how the main object of the All India Village Industries Association, founded by Gandhiji for the purpose of making the village self-sufficient through the revival and improvement of indigenous handicrafts, can be achevived and how beneficial such revival will he from the point of view of the physical, material and moral prosperity of our people.

All grain is produced in the field. Wheat and other grains have to be ground into flour, paddy has to be husked and made into rice, pulses have to be broken and the husk removed from the kernel. All these processes used, in the old days, to be performed in the village homes; but now rice, flour and "dal" mills have largely displaced the *dhenki* and *chakki* and have not only caused unemployment but have also reduced the vitamin value of food to the detriment of our bodily health. The same applies to oil seeds. Oil being an essential element of diet we may not allow it to be

deprived of its vitamins. Sugar is an important item in our daily food. Sugarcane is easily grown, and from time immemorial the village *kolhus* have provided the sugar requirements of the people. But now mills have stepped in here too. Another method of getting sugar in an easily assimilable form is honey from bees. The latter can be reared without much difficulty or labour. Vegetables and fruits are important items of diet and can and should be grown in villages. Last, though by no means least, there is milk and its products which necessitate knowledge of dairying and care and scientific breeding of cattle. Special attention has, therefore, to be paid to :

(a) Improved methods of agriculture for producing grain, cotton, sugarcane.
(b) Revival of the *dhenki* and *chakki* for husking paddy, grinding wheat and breaking pulses.
(c) Revival of oil *ghanis* for extracting oil from oil seeds.
(d) Revival of *kolhus* for making *gur* out of sugarcane.
(e) Development of the science of bee-keeping.
(f) Scientific methods of dairying and breeding of cattle.
(g) Vegetable and fruit culture.
(h) The general turning of waste into wealth as in the matter of good manure, for which intelligent use of human and animal excreta, vegetable and fruit peel, leavings of food, leaves, ashes, bones and flesh of dead animals, etc., is of enormous value.
(i) The improvements of all tools and implements for agricultural purposes and their production and manufacture in the villages themselves.

After food and clothing comes shelter. Sometimes, for social reasons, even more importance is attached to dwelling houses than to food and clothing. It is important from the point of view of village economy to see that as far as possible our houses are made with materials found in the village and by the employment of village labour. There is an economy in nature which the modern age seems to overlook. Geologists say that it takes millions of years to produce a larger of coal, mineral oil, iron ore or any other metal or mine product. We use coal, metals and mineral oils lavishly without any thought of replacing what we consume. Nature

invariably observes this economy, but we interfere with nature, in a sense, and in the pride of our scientific knowledge, we think nothing of exhausting nature's store. Far-sighted people have already begun to speculate as to the time in which the world's store of oil, coal and metals will be exhausted if we continue to use them as extravagantly as we do today. But that is a problem primarily for the machine-driven countries to face. Our village economy depends on replacing what we spend. Take the fuel used in villages, for example. We use stalks of a pulse like *arhar* and wood, and our stock can never fail. In house building, therefore, we should also use such material as is easily replaceable. Bricks and tiles can be backed without coal, and rafters and doors can be made out of our endless store of timber. A minimum of metal need be used, and comfortable dwelling houses can be constructed without much cost. We should remember that the most wonderful and durable architecture that we have in the world was built with such materials before coal, cement and steel came into use.

Apart from these absolute articles of daily use there a scores of others that man needs today with more or less urgency. These range from a needle or pin to a motor car, a railway train or ship, from pen and ink to a printing press, from an earthen wick to electricity and so on. We have to choose wisely from among our requirements and see what can be best and easily manufactured in villages. It will be found that there are hundreds of articles which village artisans can easily produce. There are places where raw material is easily available, where tradition still persists of making particular things, and where climatic and other considerations make them indispensable. We have to seek out and encourage all such handicrafts. Take paper-making, for emample, or leather articles. Raw material and workers are available for both these industries in every village. What is needed is alertness and circumspection and, above all, the conviction that in a country like ours with its vast resources and immense population, largely unemployed, there must and can be found employment for all. Large scale industry may be necessary for certain of our requirements, but our village like, our culture and art have languished because our cottage industries have died to a large extent. These must be revived, if village India has to be resuscitated. Therefore, as Gandhiji has so poetically described it, led khadi be the

sun round which all the lesser planers will revolve, and let all who wish to serve the villages use as far as possible nothing but village products.

VI. VILLAGE SANITATION

No one will deny that one of the primary necessities of a village is proper sanitation. People simply do not know how and do not seem to care to keep their surroundings or even their persons and personal habitation clean and sanitary. The result is disease, epidemics and a general deterioration in the health of the people, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" is no idle saying. It is true not only in a physical but also in a moral and spiritual sense

Each worker should acquire sanitary habits. His own person should be clean in every detail; His clothes and other belongings should be spotless and kept tidily. Dirt has been aptly described as "matter out of place". Thus the evil habits of throwing anything almost anywhere, of spitting and cleaning the nose in the house or verandah or compounds of houses or on the streets, of answering the calls of nature near the dwelling houses or in drains or on public thoroughfaces or near tanks and rivers without so much as covering the excreta with clean earth, have got to be eliminated. All these are potent causes of direase and a perfect nuisance for our neighbours. An enormous amount of wealth is wasted too by these hot being conserved properly, as they should be, for purposes of manure.

Village sanitation can be easily improved, if the inhabitants are inspited with an intelligent understanding of the dangers and ugliness of insanitation and insanitary habits. The following methods may be adopted :

(i) Roads leading to and streets in a village should be daily swept and cleaned. No refuse should be thrown on them. Such should be put into dust-bins specially kept for the purpose and which can later be emptied in the manure pits. No one including children may answer the calls of nature on public thoroughfares. Water from drains should not flow on to the streets. Drain water should be so conducted as to flow where it can be utilized,

say, for a kitchen garden.

(ii) If fields are used for answering the calls of nature, the excreta should invariably be well covered up with clean earth. A better plan is to use small movable latrines which can be constructed quite cheaply with mats fixed on either bamboo or wooden frames placed over trenches one to two feet deep and of similar width. Here too the excreta has always to be covered with clean earth. In time it gets automatically converted into manure. and thus what is a public nuisance and utterly wasted today can become wealth for the poor agriculturist.

(iii) Cattle dung, refuse, vegetable and fruit peel, etc. can all be similarly converted into manure.

(iv) All sources of water supply, e.g. tanks, wells as well as banks of rivers should be kept scrupulously clean. Today cattle are bathed and dirty vessels and soiled linen are washed in tanks whose water is often used for drinking or cooking. Well and river water is similarly polluted by dirty habits and carelessness born of ignorance. The villager must be enlightened in this respect.

(v) It should be borne in mind that the health of a village depends to a large extent on the health of each individual, and that even one person of insanitary habits is a menace to the population. Groups of young men and women can band themselves into volunteer corps for educating the villagers in the matter of sanitation. Workers must take a hand in scavenging themselves inasmuch as personal example is the best means of propaganda.

VII. NEW OR BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education has been given to us by Gandhiji with special reference to India village life. Briefly it is a complete change from the present literacy system which has led us nowhere to imparting knowledge to every boy and girl by means of a craft. It aims at utilizing to the best advantage the natural creative instinct of a child. It educates aim to use all his faculties, his eyes and his hands, etc. in addition to training his mind. If properly imparted by teachers who love children and who are

experts in the craft concerned, it will be found that the mental, moral and physical development of the child will be far greater than it is in our present-day schools. Gandhiji claims that such education will, if intelligently carried out, become self-supporting inasmuch as the products of the school will be salable in the vicinity or sold by the State whose duty it will be to dispose of them. This would *ipso facto* solve the present insurmountable difficully of spreading primary education because of the lack of funds. In its initial stages spinning has been taken as the craft best suited to the village and also because the scientific knowledge of spinning is today greater than in other crafts. But it is by no means the only craft that can be taken. Those interested in this type of education should study the reports and the literature on the subject published by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. From the latest report it will be seen what promising results have so far been achieved in spite of many limitations and difficulties. Educationists the world over have recognized the superior value of the method of education through 'doing', imparting knowledge through handicrafts, and in India it has a special value. Properly trained and enthusistic men and women teachers are wanted to make the scheme the success it deserves to be.

VIII. ADULT EDUCATION

It is a tragedy but none the less true that only 7 or 8 per cent, of the population of India is literate. And since mere literacy cannot be termed education it may be said that 95 per cent of persons are uneducated in the ordinary sense of the word. Of course even unlettered persons can be cultured, but it is obvious that knowledge of reading and writing does develop the mind and enables a person to get acquainted with the thoughts of others. Adult education must not, however, be confined to the knowledge of the 'three Rs.'. It must include a great deal of other useful and essential general education.

Every worker can take up the work of removing illiteracy in his area. It will probably be found that the evening hour will be the most suitable for holding classes for adult education. Lighting arrangements will, therefore, have to be made. Books are not required. A small plank of wood or an earthern slate blackened with charcoal as in days of old can well serve the purpose of a

blackboard. This and a piece of chalk or white earth are all that is required for imparting literacy which can be acquired in no time. Useful charts for this work have been prepared and can, if needed, be purchased at a small cost. But these are not really essential. Interest and enthusiasm on the part of the worker are far more necessary. Co-operative effort is very effective. Once a few adults have learnt how to read and write a small library should be established in which suitable litetature may gradually be collected and a daily newspaper provided.

An immense amount of general knowledge can be imparted by word of mouth. The old system of repeating the Puranas and other religious books among Hindus and of Milad Shareef among Muslims is efficacious. Our people imbibe their religious knowledge to a large extent from *kathas*, *pravachans*, *sankirtans* and *milads*. Useful knowledge of history, science, current events, etc. can be imparted orally and through reading circles. But workers must acquire accurate knowledge themselves before they can begin to impart it to others. The field of adult education offers a grand opportunity for developing a sense of citizenship as also for inculcating a spirit of corporate endeavour among the people. Both are most essential factors in village reconstruction.

IX. UPLIFT OF WOMEN

The old tradition among Hindus is that woman is the *Shakti*—the origin add sourse of all power. She has been called the better half of man. But it is tragic that in our present-day society she does not play the great part she is meant or entitled to play, because of certain social customs and prejudices which have unfortunately become, as it were, a tradition. It must be realized that no society can make real progress, if one half of its members are suppressed. The child receives its earliest instruction from its mother, and a society with ignorant suppressed women cannot hope to produce the best class of sons and daughters. We have, therefore, to banish from our hearts all ideas of the inferiority of women and give them their rightful place of absolute equality. This does not mean that woman should be made to do man's work or *vice versa*. National aptitude and limitations cannot be ignored. But apart from these there should be no distinction or restraint.

Workers should engage themselves in trying to remove such barriers and customs as are unnatural and unjust and have a detrimental effect on society :

(i) The *purdah* system should be abolished.
(ii) Women should be associated in all public work on lines of equality.
(iii) Child marriage must go.
(iv) Widow remarriage should be encouraged.
(v) Polygamy should be discouraged with a view to its ultimate abolition.
(vi) The inequalities and disabilities in law and custom under which women suffer should be sought to be removed.
(vii) Girls should be given equal opportunities with boys for education and should be made capable of earning a livelihood.
(viii) Women workers can best serve women. Adult education among women is most important as also is the cult of the *charkha.* Indeed spinning is woman's special domain and can give her the valuable status of an economic unit in the family.
(ix) The medical and teaching professions and nursing are specially suited to women. Girls should be encouraged to go in for them. They can also be trained in many handicrafts.
(x) In this as in all other constructive work the worker has to begin reform in his own home. Only in this way will he be able to change the outlook in this matter of those with whom he comes in contact.

X. EDUCATION IN HYGIENE AND HEALTH

This has been covered to some extent under No. VI. But it is essential to emphasize the necessity of keeping the body and mind in a fit condition. To this end regular habits, a health-giving balanced diet, daily exercise, work, and above all a life of self-restraint are needed.

Many of us do not cultivate regular, habits or keep to regular hours for work, sleep, food, etc. What we eat is often according

to what is good to taste without regard to what is good for our bodies. We forget that we should eat in order to live. In the case of poor people a balanced diet is not wholly possible, but the well-to-do and middle classes need to pay great attention to this important factor in their lives. Where the poor fall ill through lack of nourishing food the well-to-do suffer from diseases due to overeating. It should be within the capacity of each one of us to regulate our diet according to our needs. The simpler the cooking, the more easily digestible is our food. The vitamin value of whole meal—grains, rice and pulses—has already been stressed. These with vegetables, onions and fruits like papaya, mango, banana, guava, tomato, etc., which can be easily grown even villages, and milk and its products can constitute a wholesome diet.

Those who are engaged in hard physical labour do not stand in need of any other exercise, but for those who are engaged in sedentary occupations regular exercise is essential. Youths in schools and colleges often neglect to exercise their bodies with disastrous results to both body and mind. The best exercise is of couse that which enables, some useful work to be performed in the course of it, but this may not be possible for everyone. Walking, healthful games or yogic exercises, however, can be taken by everyone according as it suits him.

Simple food, clean living and regular exercise are not only health-giving but morally uplifting. For clean living a life of self-restraint is essential. However, much a man many regulate his food and exercise he cannot really be termed healthy if he indulges in vice and has no control over his passions. Such control is impossible without a control on the mind. Purity of mind depends to a large extent on the nature of the food and exercise one takes, the type of life, one leads, the company one keeps and the books one reads. Companions and literature should be chosen with the same care as food and exercise. A person who is sound in body and mind can influence and inspire others while his opposite will infact his environment with evil habits. It is essential, therefore, for workers to lead pure and healthy lives so that they may be able to spread the gospel of health and hygiene and thereby being wealth and happiness to their neighbours.

XI. PROPAGATION OF RASATRA BHASHA

India has suffered greatly by the imposition of a foreign language as the medium of instruction and of intercourse among the educated. The strain on a child of learning a foreign language is very great, and the tendency then is to concentrate on the language rather than on the substance of what is taught. It is an indisputable fact that instruction is best imparted through the mother tongue. It follows, therefore, that the provincial language should form the natural vehicle for instruction and expression of our thought. At the same time a vast country like ours does need a common language for interprovincial intercourse and national purposes. This national language (Rashtra Bhasha) should be such as can be easily understood and learnt by all. We are fortunate that the language which is understood—even if it is not always spoken correctly—by the vast bulk of inhabitants of Northern and Central India has much of its vocabulary in common with the provincial languages even where it is not spoken. It has thus the two-fold advantage of being understood by nearly half the population India as well as of possessing a vocabulary, a fair proportion of which, in varying degrees, is in common with the rest of India. It is this language—Hindustani—which has naturally been recognised as our natural language, and it is the duty of every worker to acquire a good working knowledge of it. We do not need to enter into the existing sharp differences of opinion regarding its name, etc. It is our duty to know the language and be able to read and write it in both the Devanagari (Hindi) and Urdu (Persian) scripts.

XII. CULTIVATING LOVE OF ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE

It has been stated under the preceding head that the cultivation of a national language is a necessity for national purposes. But the cultivation of one's mother tongue is equally necessary from the point of view of one's own growth, the preservation of one's culture, and as a means of expressing one's innermost thoughts. Our provincial languages alone can fulfil this need. They have their own literature which has withstood the ravages of time and has added to the spiritual and moral values of life. It is our duty not only to preserve this heritage but to seek to augment it. There need be no conflict between the provincial languages and

the *Rashtra Bhasha* Indeed, they must progress hand in hand, each fulfilling its own purpose and acting and reacting healthily on the other. It is necessary for everyone to be proficient in the knowledge of his own mother tongue. In addition it would be advisable if dwellers of the North learnt a Southern language as Southerners learn the *Rashtra Bhasha.*

XIII. WORKING FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY

There is no gainsaying the fact that an immense economic inequality prevails in present-day society. Not only are some countries much richer than others but even in the same country there are gross inequalities between individuals as also between sections of society. England and America as countries are vastly richer than India. The average income of an Indian may be said to be about Rs. 50 per annum as against the similarly calculated income of Rs. 1,800 and Rs. 3,000 of the Englishman and the American respectively. Even in those countries, however, there are rich millionaires in contrast to the poor daily labourer who has to eke out an existence with the help of unemployment doles in dull seasons. In our own country we have the spectacle of a palace side by side with a novel. Only in our country there are many more hovels than palaces ! We know too that all wars and the most ghastly world war raging today have as their root cause the rivalry between nations for the possession of wealth and land. These will certainly continue so long as the present basis of soeiety and outlook on life persist. Existing inequalities must, therefore, be removed, if peace and happiness are to reign over the earth. Attempts to achieve this end have been made by means of violent revolution. It remains to be seen whether what has been attained in this way will last if the violent force which brought it into being were to be removed. The most stable and lasting equality will certainly be that which is not imposed from outside but which grows from within as a result of voluntary control of the acquisitive and exploiting tendency in man. Such a change in outlook requires a training of the mind of the individual, and if the effort to bring it about were undertaken on a nation-wide scale, it would certainly be possible, through undoubtedly the task is fraught with difficulty. But such a state of mind can only come into being in a society based on non-violence. All men are not endowed with the

same nature nor with an equal amount of talent, intelligence, and capacity for work. In present-day society these inequalities are aggravated and increased by artificial social advantages or disadvantages of birth, education, income, etc. Force may remove artificial social conditions, but it cannot equalize the natural gifts of individuals. These gifts can be utilized either for the benefit of the individual or for the service of all. The society which is based on violence will naturally utilize them for the aggrandizement of the individual or the particular section of society or the country to which he belongs. In a society based on non-violence they will be utilized for the benefit of all,—but such a society has still to be established. Existing inequalities have to be minimized and finally removed in a non-violent manner. How can this be accomplished ?

It is individuals who must make the beginning and spread the doctrine by their example. We must get rid of the nation that health and happiness depend on the riches we possess. We must realize that it is a moral duty to spend a minimum on our essential requirements and to hold to surplus in trust for the general good. 'Plain living and high thinking' do uplift, and the leaven of a simple and contented life among all workers in particular will definitely spread. Social honour or status based on possession or birth has to give place to honour and status based on character and service. The State may work towards this end while our ideal is in the making by judicious laws and taxation which encourage the removal of inequalities. But in a non-violent society the State will rarely, if ever, have need to interfere. While we are not masters in our own land we have to work as much as we can on the voluntary basis. Capitalists and factory owners may start with giving better wages and amenities of life to the workers, e.g., the wherewithal to supply themselves with good health-giving food and sufficient clothing, suitable living quarters, education for their children and healthy recreation and cultural facilities for them and those dependent on them. They may go further and divide the profits with the labourers. They may make the profits available for the country at large after retaining what is sufficient for their own requirements. Zamindars should treat their tenants fairly and justly and spend surplus incomes on the latter's vital requirements. The same applies to lawyers, doctors, etc. If all, who can, pool their surplus resources for the benefit of the masses, an immense

beginning towards bringing in an equitable order will have been made. But the chief thing for the monied men is to limit their expenses so as to bring them on a level, as far as possible, with what should be possible for a labourer in an ideal society.

We have dealt with the thirteen items of the constructive programme which Gandhiji has specifically mentioned. There are certain others which may also be considered. As these are more or less of an organizational nature, they can be usefully employed for furthering the thirteen-fold programme.

XIV. CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

Organizing the masses for the struggle for freedom is constructive work of first class importance. We have the general organization of the Congress. We may also endeavour to organize the kisans, labourers and students, for exampls. The work of these organizations may overlap to some extent; but if they are based on non-violence, conflict is impossible. And misunderstandings or differences can easily be resolved without leaving any trace of bitterness. It will be as well to deal with each of these in some detail.

The Congress organization consists of members belonging to all classes, creeds and races. Anyone who signs its creed and pays his annual subscription of four *annas* becomes a member and is eligible for election to any of its Committees or elective offices so long as he fulfills the conditions laid down in the constitution. There is no ban on the ground of class, creed, race or sex. Every individual has the fullest opportunity for work and service through which he can win the confidence of Congressmen. It is a purely voluntary organization and has no external sanction for enforcing its decisions on its members except that of public opinion among them. The most powerful sanction is the will and determination of the Congressman himself. It is, therefore, the duty and responsibility of each individual member to keep the organization pure and above suspicion. There must be no bogus enrolment of members on the register. Elections must be free from all unfair means. It is not, unfortunately, possible today to say that all these conditions are fulfilled. Every Congressman can, however, help to remove these defects which weaken the organization and lesson its usefulness. We must remember that the Congress organization, its

activities and all that it stands for are constantly in the limelight—limelight of a nature which very often magnifies the proportions of its defects. Inasmuch as the Congress can possess no strength except that which it derives from the confidence it can inspire in the general public and amongst its own members, it must be above corruption and dishonesty of any kind. Not only must Congressmen see to it that enrolment of members is honestly done and no foul play takes place in elections, but where public questions are concerned they must help in arriving at just and proper decisions without fear or favour, without being influenced by party, communal or class considerations. For, it must be rememberd that the Congress can retain its national character and hold its head high only if it can command universal confidence and respect. To the extent that the Congress as a whole or even any of its humblest branches moves away from its moorings, it loses its national and moral character and ceases to be the power for good that it otherwise can and should be.

XV. KISAN ORGANIZATION

Kisans and their dependents constitute nearly 85 per cent of the population of India. The thirteen-fold constructive programme would have no value unless is served to help them. All work in the villages must conduce to their benefit, and no work which injuries or ignores the interests of such a large proportion of the population can be said to be truly constructive. If the items of the consturctive programme have been intelligently understood, it will have been realized that the truest service of the kisans consists in carrying out the items in letter and in spirit. Viewed in this light, a separate organization of kisans is unnecessary. They (the kisans) should join and make their own the Congress organization which, if it cannot help and save them, will cease to be the power it today is. But it will be useful to give here some detailed advice in regard to helping the peasantry.

For kisans to have specific grievances against their landlords or the Government is a matter of common occurrence. They are generally of an urgent nature and cannot wait for redress untill Swaraj has been attained. It is the duty and function of every worker to identify himself with the kisans wherever such real grievances exist and to help and guide them in obtaining redress.

Negotiation based on non-violence often succeeds in securing the necessary redress; but if it fails, the peasants have a right to resort to civil disobedience or even non-payment of rent or revenue. The more widely felt the grievance, the fairer the demand; and provided the movement is conducted in a non-violent way, they surer and quicker the success will be.

There are other troubles which kisans have to face. They often quarrel among themselves and in resorting to litigation ruin themselves. A worker who have been able through his service to command the respect and confidence of the people should often succeed in settling the differences and stopping litigation. The same applies to minor disputes between peasant and landlord.

It is, however, necessary to emphasize the fact that no organization should be used for exploiting the peasantry for political or other purposes. If Congressmen serve them rightly, the kisans will come into the Congress organization of their own free will, recognizing its utility, honesty and power. Such allegiance will be steady and unselfish and hence, far more valueable than if they were asked to join a political organization on the basis of their self-interest or if a separate organization for them were started.

Work of a most important and far-reaching character can be done among kisans by introducing the system of co-operative farming. Agriculture ceases to be a profitable business, if the holdings become too small. And with our laws of inheritance it is impossible to prevent sub-division of property. But joint cultivation by individuals, each contributing his share of labour and dividing the produce, is possible and advisable. Improvements in methods of agriculture which the individual may not be able to afford himself can be co-operatively utilized. Similar economy may be introduced in the matter of maintenance of livestock. Co-operative farming offers a vast field for very useful work.

As work on behalf of kisans is of such great importance, it will be well for the Congress to have a special department for them as it has for foreign affairs, etc.

XVI. LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Labour employed in factories is a group which has been organized in Trade Unions. It is a small group compared with

peasants. But being concentrated in industrial cities it is easy of approach an organization. Being engaged in handling machinery and tools requiring intelligence, it is supposed also to possess more intelligence as a class than peasants. There is no harm in organizing labour for the benefit of lobour, but they must not be exploited for political purposes. As in the case of kisans much of the constructive programme is bound to benefit and should be worked among them. Trade Unions are necessary to secure for labour just and fair conditions of work and social amenities, but sometimes they are formed solely for organizing strikes for creating trouble. While strikes are necessary if the employer is unreasonable and unbending, they should be resorted to only in the last instance when every other method for getting fair play and justice has failed. The guidance and help of good workers among labour is very essential. Gandhiji has claimed that the Ahmedabad Labour Union founded by him is a model for all labour. Workers should study its history and constitution and try to bring such unions into being wherever possible.

XVII. STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Students form another important group among whom work is necessary. But this work is of a different kind altogether. Students do not constitute a class whose interests conflict with those of another class and, therefore, should not really need an organization to protect and safeguard their interests. Educational authorities are public servants whose main duty it should be to prepare the youth committed to their charge to be good, healthy citizens, intellectually, physically and morally. An organization for students, therefore, on the lines of a Kisan Sabha or Trade Union is quite unnecessary. But circumstanced as we are today the educational authorities are not public servants in the true sense of the term. They are the servants of the State whose interest does not coincide with that of the country. The education imparted by the British government is intended for a particular purpose, and hence conflict arises between students actuated by national ideals and teachers controlled by anti-national power. So long as students depend on the State for their education and prospects in life it is impossible for them to fight it. Their embroilment in politics while they are in State

institutions makes their education even less efficient than it is. A students' organization should, therefore, not be for the ventilation of the country's grievances and for enforcing redress thereof, but for supplementing the deficiencies in the education imparted in existing institutions. It should be an organization calculated to make them efficient citizens and not for fighting political battles. This does not imply that students have no part to play in the freedom movement. They have, but they will do it more effectively if their time as students is usefully applied in studying particular as also current events and in preparing themselves for rather than trying to participate in, the struggle. Those, of course, who feel the urge to do so will cut themselves adrift from State educational institutions and devote themselves to the service of the country. But they will then not remain members of the students' organizations. The constructive programme, however, is there for the student as for anyone else. They can make a valuable contribution to many of its items. They can certainly root out the canker of communal distrust and jealousy. They can root out untouchability from among themselves. They can spare some time daily for spinning and utilize their intelligence and mechanical skill in the improvement of the instruments. They have no excuse for not being clad in khadi. They can devote some of their spare time in the evenings towards adult education and the liquidation of illiteracy. They have special facilities for becoming proficient in their mother tongue and for learning the Rashtra Bhasha. They can help in the matter of social reform and bringing about a changed outlook as far as the status of woman is concerned in their own families. They can make their own lives simple and contented and thus make a beginning towards the ideal of economic eqnality. They can spend part of their vacation in the service of the villages. There need be no conflict with authority or their parents if they give their time aud attention to these and other items of the constructive programme. It will, on the other hand, give them very valuable opportunities for acquiring practical knowledge and making useful contacts which will stand them in good stead in later life and enable them to meet the demands bound to be made on them as citizens of a free country. A 'students' organization based and conducted on these lines will fulfil a crying need and help to unite them in a common bond of service. Devoted

workers are needed who can win the love and confidence of the student world and bring into their ranks that discipline and unity which are so badly lacking today. Workers must be free from passion or prejudice and utterly unselfish. They must not be liable to be carried away by gusts of passing enthusiasm or depressed by the chill air of dejection. They must work with confidence and faith and an understanding of youth.

CONCLUSION

Gandhiji's pamphlet on the constructive programme has shown clearly the close link between it and the struggle for freedom. There is no Indian, whatever his school of political thought, whatever his community, who does not desire complete freedom for his country. There is not a single item in the programme which can be termed controversial. It is all-embracing and all-inclusive. The humblest and the tallest amongst us can find plenty of room for self-expression therein. It applies equally to men and women, young and old. Indeed, a very great contribution can be expected from women. Let me hope that it will enthuse all and be worked with intelligence, energy, faith and vigour so that India may come into her own at the earliest possible moment.

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SINCE HE CAME TO CHAMPARAN

RAJENDRA PRASAD

My first acquaintance with Mahatma Gandhi in person was in April 1917. I had heard and read about him and his work in South Africa. On his return to India sometime in 1915 I had seen him from a distance at a meeting organised to give him reception in Calcutta. I had also seen him from a distance at the Congress Session held in Lucknow in December 1916, and again just a few days before my actual acquaintance at Calcutta at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. Some people of Champaran had met him at the time of the Lucknow Congress and related to him their grievances against the Indigo planters. He had listened to their stories of woe and suffering, but was not prepared to accept all that they said without personal verification. He promised them to visit Champaran for a few days for this purpose. In fulfilment of this promise he started with Shri Rajkumar Shukul, the leader of the tenants for Champaran from Calcutta after the meeting of the All India Congress Committee there. I also attended the meeting of the A.I.C.C., and war seated near him in the meeting; but not having personal acquaintance, I had no talk with him and I did not know that he was going to Bihar from there. I went away to Puri for a holiday, and Rajkumar Shukul took him at Patna to my house where there was nobody except a servant. Not knowing who he was and taking him to be some villager who had come there as a client I was then practising as a lawyer), he did not

pay any attention to him and put him up in some room where such people used to be put up. He was there for a few hours. When people in the town came to know about his visit, the late Mazharul Huq took him to his own house from where Gandhiji left the same evening for Champaran. The town of Muzaffarpur falls on the way to Champaran from Patna, and so he stopped at Muzaffarpur where Acharya Kripalani was a professor in the G.B.B. College. The train arrived there at midnight. Acharya Kripalani had been informed that he was coming, and so he was at the station with some of his students to receive him. I stayed a Muzaffarpur for two days with Prof. Malkani.

The rayats in Champaran had been so badly treated and oppressed for a long time that they were afraid even of complaining against the planters to a magistrate or to any Government official. A story was related that when a rayat took courage to approach a magistrate, the men of the planters used to drag him out even from the presence of the magistrate in court and him a beating, to be followed by various other kinds of harassment. The rayats, therefore, were afraid even of lodging a complaint. But as soon as the news that Karmavir Gandhi of the South African fame was coming to help them, after the return of Rajkumar Shukul from the Lucknow Congress, somehow or other a change come over many of them. By the time he reached Muzaffarpur the news had gone ahead of him, and many tenants of Champaran came to see him at Muzaffarpur. When he reached Motihari, the headquarter of the district, there was a crowd to receive him at the railway station. When on the day following his arrival he started to visit a village from where intimation of looting and arson by planters men of villagers had reached him, he was asked by the District Magistrate to see him, and was served with a notice to leave the district by the first available train. He of course disobeyed it, and on the following day he was prosecuted before a magistrate for disobedience of the District Magistrate's order. When he went to court to answer the charge, there was a crowd of thousands that had assembled, and a scene was witnessed the like of which had never been seen before in the court precincts of Champaran. He made up his mind to disobey the order because he felt that he could not give up the cause of the rayats for whom he had come; and the very fact that the district officials did not want him to hold the inquiry which he intended

to hold, made him suspicious, and he felt that there must be something which they wanted to conceal from him. After the noticed was served and he disobeyed it, he wired to me asking me to go to Motihari. He had heard about me from Rajkumar, and also perhaps from other friends whom he met at Muzaffarpur and Motihari. My acquaintance with Champaran was of the flimsiest kind. I happened to be a practitioner in the High Court, and some of the poor rayats had to come to the High Court occasionally for their cases, and I used to help them. The late Babu Brijkishore and the late Babu Dharnidhar had extensive practice in the District Courts, and the former was also a member of the Legislative Council. He had become the champion of the Champaran rayats in the Council where he used to put questions, move resolutions and do such other things as could be done to help them in the Council. Both of them used to help them as lawyers in their litigation against the planters and to send such of the cases as went up to the High Court to me. That is how Rajkumar Shukul had come to know me, and on the strength of that kind of acquaiutance he had taken Mahatmaji to my house at Patna in my absence.

I, along with Babu Brijkishore Prasad, Mazharul Huq Saheb and some others, started for Motihari on receipt of this telegram. We arrived there at about 3 O'clock in the afternoon. The case had been taken up by the magistrate earlier in the day, and after Mahatmaji made a statement admitting that he had intentionally disobeyed the order and was prepared to take the severest penalty that the magistrate could impose, the magistrate had adjourned the case for four or five days for passing orders. The magistrate had expected that there would be legal arguments, and that witnesses would have to be examined and cross-examined, and then argument for the prosecution and for the defence and so on. The trial started in the usual way; but as soon as the prosecuting pleader had started examining a witness, Gandhiji said it was unnecessary to call witnesses as he was ready with a statement admitting that he had disobeyed the order. When he read it out the magistrate did not know what to do. The statement did not say in so many words that he pleaded guilty. It was one of these magnificent statements with which the country became familiar in course of time but which was altogether extraordinary and unfamiliar then. The magistrate pointed out that it did not

amount to a plea of guilty, and so he would have to go through the formality of examining witnesses. As a matter of fact the magistrate did not like such a speedy conclusion of this trial as he was not prepared to deliver a sentence then and there. So he put forward this plea that the statement did not amount to a plea of guilty. But Gandhiji was not prepared to allow the proceedings to be prolonged; and so he said that, if the magistrate insisted, he would plead guilty. The magistrate then had no option but it pass a sentence. He said he would pass sentence two hours later, and asked Gandhlji to furnish a bail which he refused to do. Ultimately the magistrate let him go without any bail on promise that he would attend when required. Gandhiji waited there; and when the two hours were over, the magistrate said he would deliver the judgment some days later.

Gandhiji had returned from court, after this trial, to his residence when we arrived there. I had of course heard how he had been taken to my house and how my servant had treated him, and was naturally abashed. When the same was mentioned to him as one of the new arrivals, he simply laughed and stated that he had been to my house in Patna in my absence. Without going into formalities, he at once came to business with us, the new arrivals. He told us what had happened in the court, and said that it looked as if the magistrate would drop the proceedings and let him proceed with the inquiries; yet one could not be certain about it. His reading, which turned out to be perfectly correct, was that the magistrate had taken time, after consultation with the District Magistrate, to make a reference to the Provincial Government, as to what should be done; and he felt that probably the Provincial Government would not like to take the responsibility of sending him to jail, particularly because the first World War was then going on and they would not like any serious agitation at that time. But, he said, we should be prepared for the worst; and he asked us what we would do in case he was imprisoned. We were wholly unacquainted with his method of work, and we has not gone there prepared for any action which might involve our absence from our work, much less our imprisonment. We were not in a position to answer the question without knowing what he would expect us to do. While going to Muzaffarpur he had taken two lawyer friends with him, who knew the local language, to help him as interpreters as he did not understand the the dialect of the people of Champaran. After

he had disobeyed the orders and had been summoned before the magistrate, he had put the same question to them. Babu Dharnidhar, who was the seniormost among them and who was a most frank, honest, plain and blunt man, said: "We came here to interpret to you what the people of this place said. When you go to jail there will be nobody to whom we shall have to interpret, so we shall go home." This was the reply from a lawer, but they were themselves not satisfied with it; and they began to think and, after cogitation, the next morning they decided to follow him and to do what he would ask them to do. He suggested to them that they should carry on the investigation after he had been sent to prison and, if they were ordered to leave and if they were not prepared to disobey, they might go away and send another batch to carry on the inquiry to be followed similarly by another batch and so on. This was acceptable to them. But they thought, amongst themselves, that Gandhiji was totally a stranger, and yet he was prepared to go to prison for the sake of the rayats: if, they, on the other hand, being not only residents of adjoining districts but also those who claimed to have served these rayats, should go home, it would be a shameful desertion. Ultimately they made up their minds to go to prison. They conveyed this decision to him just when he was going to court. He was very much pleased, and at once said that the battle in Champaran was won. When the question was put to us we did not know all this, and so we took a little time to consider and to consult those friends who had been with him from before. They related to us the whole story as to how they had arrived at the stage when they expressed their preparedness to court imprisonment. All of us now gathered for consultation, and had of course no difficulty after this in coming to the same conclusion. We told him that, and he was pleased. He was a *pukka* business man. He at once took a piece of paper and a pencil and took down the names of all of us. He divided us into batches of two each, and put down the order in which each batch would disobey the order. There were some days still intervening before the date fixed for the judgment. We were permitted to go home, settle our affairs and return; and the first batch, which was to consist of Mazharul Huq Saheb and Babu Brijkishore, was expected to be ready on the date of the judgment. It was this very first incident which left on his mind a very favourable impression about Bihar, and he was never tired of repeating

how happy he was and how he had acquired such confidence in Bihar.

The inquiry into the grievances of the rayats proceeded, and after some time he was summoned by the Lieutenant-Governor to meet him. We had, in the meantime, collected a great deal of evidence in support of their complaints. We had examined something like 20 to 25 thousand witnesses, taking down statements in full of about ten thousand and summary of the rest. We had also collected thousands of documents which we had sorted and classified, and we knew every little detail about the district. All this had created a panic among the planters and the officials, and they had sent frantic reports to the Lieutenant-Governor. When Gandhiji was summoned it was apprehended that he might not be permitted to return and would probably be either detained or externed from the province. So before he left for Ranchi to meet the Governor, we had again prepared a list of satyagrahis and the order in which they were to court imprisonment, and we were expecting a message from Ranchi. The result of three or four long interviews with the Lieutenant-Governor was that he appointed a Commission to go into the grievances, and made Gandhiji a member of that Commission. The Commission, which had on it representatives of the planters, zamindars and the Government officials with one single representative in Mahatma Gandhi of the rayats, gave a unanimous report and made certain recommendations which the Government implemented by legislation.

This unanimous report also has a history. It is not necessary to give the details of the grievances, but the unanimous recommendation was that the grievances which rose on account of the compulsory cultivation by every rayat of indigo on his own land for the benefit of the planters should be abolished. The planters had imposed enhancement in the rent of the rayats and realised a large amount of money from them for which there was no legal justification. The recommendation on this point was that the enhancement should be reduced by about 25 per cent and the cash should be refunded also to the extent of 25 per cent. Gandhiji had secured the unanimity in the recommendation by allowing the enhancement to remain to the extent of over 75 per cent and giving up the claim to the cash exactions to the same extent. This appeared to many as a compromise which

yielded too much. I remember, Gandhiji told us that these planters had been able to lord it over the rayats because of their prestige; the mere fact that they had been obliged to give up a part of the enhancement and to refund a part of the cash was enough to damage, if not altogether to destroy, their prestige; and, therefore, we need not entertain any apprehension that the rayats would submit to the planters any more. He saw clearly that it would not be profitable for the planters to remain there if they could not exact illegal perquisites, and when the rayats had learnt to refuse to pay was not legally payable, the planter' game would be up. This turned out to be literally true. Although he had given up the demand of the rayats to the extent of 75 per cent in the compromise, the planters left Champaran within a few years after his visit; and at places where there used to stand their well-furnished bungalows; well-kept gardens and big stables the rayats have now got their houses, and every inch of land which the planters had in their possession has passed to the rayats. This process had started by 1920-21 when Gandhiji initiated the Non-Co-operation Movement; and no wonder those of us who had the privilege to be associated with him in Champaran had seen his work and his method and the achievement, could easily foresee that the same process would be repeated on a tremendously big scale in India if only we remained true to his principles and followed his lead. He was a Champaran for seven or eight months at one continuous stretch before the report of the Commission was submitted; and no less than a year's time was taken before the legislation incorporating the recommendation was passed and the end of the planters' oppression commenced. It has taken some thirty years to complete the work of gaining freedom for India, but it has come, and that more or less in the same imperceptible way. Whenever Gandhiji appeared to compromise with the British Government of to withdraw any of the movements which he had started, people used to find fault with him just as some had done in Champaran; but we know the result now.

I will mention one or two instances of those early days of my association with him which have left a deep impression on my mind. When Mr. Charlie Andrews got the information about his prosecution in Champaran he came to Motihari. He was about to go to the Fiji Island a few days later, and came just to see Gandhiji, before leaving India. We were waiting in Champaran

for the magistrate's judgment when he came. We came to know from Mr. Andrews that he would have to leave the following day. Some of us felt that it would be helpful if he was induced to stay, and so we asked him to stay in Champaran at least for some days more. The good man that he was he agreed provided Mahatmaji allowed him, and so we pressed him to speak to Gandhiji and get his permission to stay. He mentioned the matter to him, and we had a talk with Gandhiji about this matter. When we insisted that Mr. Andrews should be allowed to stay, Gandhiji became more insistent and more firm, and said that Mr. Andrews must go. The whole thing was unintelligible to us. But he had read our minds, and he came out. He said : "You all feel that here we are all engaged in a fight against English planters who have great influence with English officials and perhaps also with the Central and Provincial Governments, and even in England; and you think that in this unequal fight if we have an Englishman on our side it would be helpful. This shows the weakness of your heart. The cause is just, and you must rely upon yourselves to win the battle. You should not seek a prop in Mr. Andrews because he happens to be an Englishman. Because I understood what is passing in your minds, the more you have insisted the more have I become convinced that Mr. Andrews should go, and so he must leave tomorrow morning." He had read our minds correctly, and we had no reply. Mr. Andrews left the following morning, but before he left he went to see the District Magistrate who gave him the news that the Provincial Government had ordered the case to be withdrawn and to allow the inquiry to proceed. He gave this intimation, to our great joy and relief, before he left the Fiji. Gandhiji, however, taught us a lesson, in this way, of self-reliance.

Another instance. When we were carrying on the investigation there was naturally a consternation amongst the planters who used to send all kinds of reports against Gandhiji and more particularly against Babu Brijkishore Prased who was known to them as an agitator on account of his work in the Legislative Council of which he was a member. One I.C.S. magistrate, an Englihman, who later became the Governor of a province, used to have very friendly talks with Gandhiji about his South African experience, his non-violence, and kindred subjects. But he used

also to send very alarming reports to the Government about the situation. In one of these reports he had drawn a very lurid picture of how on account of the presence of Gandhiji an atmosphere had been created of disregard for law, that the British Government had ceased to function in that part of the country, and that Gandhiji was looked upon as the person to whom complaints could be carried even against the magistrate and the Government, and so forth. The idea of course was that the Government should take some action and remove him from there. But he was fair enough to send the report to Gandhiji for his comments which, he said, he would forward along with it to the Government. The note also mentioned that the paper was to be treated as confidential. Gandhiji never kept anything back from us. So he did not like to keep this document from us, and he wrote to the magistrate in reply that by confidential he meant that the document would not be published, but that he could not keep it from his co-workers without whose help and consultation he was unable to do anything. So if the magistrate wanted any document not to be shown to us, he should not send it to him because he could not see anything which he could not show to us. We did not like his writing this, because we felt that, if the magistrate acted according to his suggestion, even Gandhiji would not have any information about what was passing between local officials and the Government, and this might hamper our work. We would rather forego the temptation of knowing all that happened, and would be satisfied if Gandhiji knew how the official mind was working so that he might take decisions with full knowledge. But Gandhiji said that this would not be right. It would be wrong to let the magistrate remain under the impression that nobody saw these document when as a matter of fact we were reading them, and, Gandhiji added, he did not like to read them alone. He taught us how scrupulous we should be in such matters.

Another instance will illustrate the same point. We had many acquaintances among Government servants. Many of them felt that it was their duty to help us in our work, and some of them used to send us confidential documents. They were supposed to contain information of great value for our work. Once such a document came to our hand, and we placed the paper in his hand. When he heard all about it he did not open it,

and said that unless he was assured that the document had been honestly secured he would not look at it, and that we too should not look at it. We have adhered to this principle ever since.

Another instance. In those days the Home Rule agitation was at its height. Mrs. Annie Besant had been interned, and there was a great agitation going on all over the province. All of us used to take some interest in Congress work as it used to be in those days, and we felt that we too should do something to carry the message of Home Rule to the villages. Gandhiji forbade us, and none of us including himself opened his lips on any political subject anywhere in the district of Champaran. He used to tell us that we were doing really genuine Home Rule work and establishing Swaraj there. We did not fully realise the significance of this, but we obeyed him; and, I feel, we should not have improved the situation in Bihar if, instead of concentrating on the work in hand, we had gone about talking of Home Rule in those days. He used to tell us that we were winning credit which would be of immense help to us later; and I have seen the truth of this in the everyday life.

I will give an incident of a later date. There was special session of the Congress at Bombay in 1918 which was presided over by Mr. Hasan Imam. Gandhiji could not attend it as he was lying very ill at Ahmedabad. After Champaran he had been called away to Kheda where there was satyagraha which took the shape of non-payment to Government revenue. He had to work very hard their and subsequently he also interested himself and moved great deal in connection with recruitment which was then going on for the war. As a result he was taken very seriously ill. From Bombay I went to Ahmedabad to see him. He was then living in a big house in the city. I stayed there for a few days. He was not feeling very happy in that house, and was insisting that he should move to the Sabarmati ashram. The ashram had been opened while he was in Champaran. There were just a few rooms which had then been bulit, and he wanted to shift there leaving the big palatial house in the city. All friends and doctors felt his stay in the city was more convenient both because of the house and because doctors and others were more easily available although he was not taking any medicine. One afternoon he was very insistent. I had gone away to see the city, and on my return I found that he had gone to the ashram.

So I followed him there, and I learnt that, although he had high temperature, they could not induce him to stay, and so he had to be taken to the ashram. I was to leave the next day, and I went to his room early in the morning. He was then very weak and looked much distressed. When I told him that I would be going, he kept quiet for some time and then began to talk. He said he had insisted upon coming to the ashram in spite of his high temperature because he was feeling very unhappy in that big palace. Then he related how he had been keeping awake and revolving in his mind all the time his own life and activities and how distressed he was. He had started so many projects, but had not completed anything to his satisfaction. How would he fit in with a big palace like that ? How could he live there ? and so on. He lead started work amongst the mill-labourers of Ahmedabad, but before it made any progress he had to take to something else. He had thought of starting to ashram and had made arrangements for it when he was called away to Champaran. He had hoped to finish the work in Champaran in a few days and to go back by the time fixed for the opening of the ashram. This he could not do is he was held up there for months. In Champaran he had succeeded in getting some relief for the rayats, but to him that was not enough. He had started schools and wanted to have close contact with the district so that the people might be trained, but he could not give time to this work as he had to go to Kheda. There also the plan had succeeded in the sense that relief had been obtained, but before he could train them he had to take up the work of recruitment, and now he was so ill. He did not know if he would recover from this illness, and he was doubtful if he would be able to do anything more. So his whole life had been one in which he had taken up things, left them half done, and now he was to pass away; but if that was the will of God, there was no help; and he began to cry like a child. Some of us who were present there could hardly offer any words of consolation. After some time he collected himself, and said that he had been feeling very miserable all the time, and that the tears which had been shed had consoled him; and then he talked about other things.

On many occasions, during the long course of most than thirty years' intimate association in his work, I have not felt convinced about the correctness and expediency of the line of

action which he was suggesting, and I have expressed to him my doubts. He used to argue and try to convince, sometimes without success; but I acted according to his advice and on every occasion I have ultimately found that his view was correct and my reasoning, though correct logically, was not right in action. This has happened from the very beginning of my association. After some time I used to feel there might be something wrong in my own reasoning, and I became what may be called a 'blind follower', as a result of experience. I will mention just one instance. When the movement in 1930 was about to be started Gandhiji suggested that we should break salt laws. Many of us could not see how this could affect the British Government. Many expressed their doubts about it, while others openly ridiculed the idea of winning Swaraj by disobeying salt laws. Considering the condition of Bihar which had no seacoast I felt we should select some other law which the people could easily understand and disobey. There is a tax called the Chaukidari Tax which almost every villager has to pay. It is a small tax, but it is regarded as an oppressive one by the poorer people. There is always a great amount of discontent against it. So I suggested to Gandhiji in the course of argument that he should permit us in Bihar to refuse to pay the Chaukidari Tax rather than to disobey the salt laws. He said we would be beaten in the very first round if we did that; if, however, we succeeded in disobeying the salt laws, we might try it afterwards; but even it was doubtful whether we would succeed. I was not convinced but I obeyed, and we started the salt campaign. It was so very successful in Bihar that there was hardly any corner of the province where the law was not openly and defiantly disobeyed. The same thing happened all over the country, and all sceptics realised the strength behind the movement and how he had laid down this apparently innocuous programme which had created such mass energy. After we had disobeyed these salt laws for some months the rainy season came, and it became physically impossible to do anything by way of disobeying salt laws. I, therefore, advised that the Bihar people should start non-payment of the Chaukidari Tax. They did it, but the Government came down upon them with such tremendous force that in many places they succumbed; and had not the Gandhi-Irwin truce come, we would have been beaten.

I could mention many instances. but I would stop here.

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EDUCATION IN LEADERSHIP*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It is the youth who would succeed to the heritage of history as also to the burdens and responsibilities of the future. The happiness and prosperity of our people would depend very largely on their idealism and enthusiasm, devotion and loyalty. I always find very great pleasure in being with young people. My pleasure increases all the more on an occasion like this when I am able to encourage young boys and girls who have distinguished themselves in different spheres of life by awarding them suitable prizes. I extend my congratulations to them. At the same time, I would like to say to those students who, for any reason, have not been able to secure any prize today to remember that it is not success so much as the firm resolution to succeed that matters in life. If, therefore, they have not been able to win the distinction which their more fortunate brethern have, they should not in any way weaken in their resolve or slacken in their efforts. On the contrary, they should ever continue to strive with undying enthusiasm and inexhaustible faith for achieving the highest success in their lives.

During its long existence, numerous princes have received education at this college; and after qualifying from here have devoted themselves to the service of the country and of Rajasthan. It inspired them with modern ideals and developed in them the

*Speech at the Annual Prize Distribution function of Mayo College, Ajmer, on 13 February 1951.

secular attitude towards life. It was to a certain extent a result of this education that when in 1947 the Rules of Rajasthan and other Indian States were faced with the problem of choosing between national unity and their own personal sovereignty, they, of their own accord and with great pleasure, preferred national unity and surrendered their sovereign powers to the Union. Instances of such a political revolution are rare in human history. In my opinion, the Princes derived the strength to take part in this unique revolution from the ideals which this college had continued to plant in the minds of its princely students throughout these many decades.

Conditions have changed. We are engaged today in the establishment of a society in which all citizens would have equal rights and responsibilities and in which all of them would be at once rulers and subjects. I am satisfied to find that those in charge of this institution have realised the significance of the change and have opened its doors to members of every class and section of our society. I am glad that they want the college to serve the citizens of India in general and of Rajasthan in particular with the same devotion with which it had served the scions of the Ruling Princes. Our country needs large numbers of young men and women having qualities of leadership and great physical and moral strength. I think that institutions like yours would continue to play a very important role in the production of young men of such character and ideology. Public Schools can successfully realise this objective simply because they do not remain satisfied with imparting mere book knowledge to their students, but also try to mould the entire personality of these students so as to make them most suited to collective life. Besides, they carry on this work in a social and cultural atmosphere in which it can be completed with the greatest ease. Throughout their academic career in these institutions, students have to live collectively and so naturally acquire the habit of collective living and endeavour. Moreover, through the influences operating on them, these institutions seek to mould their lives. Students remain completely, free and unaffected by distracting influences. Without much difficulty, these institutions are able to develop the personality of the students according to the ideals which these institutions have placed before themselves.

I would like, at the same time, to urge upon the managers of

such institutions and the teachers working in them to be particularly vigilant about the type of leadership which they seek to produce and develop among their students. It should be one that is inspired through and through by the ideal of the good of entire humanity and by the passion to serve all human beings. It should not be a leadership which seeks to exploit the time and energy of the less fortunate and capable of their fellow-beings for the promotion of its own selfish interests. The Gurukuls which existed in ancient times, in our country, also had as their objective the development of the capacity for leadership among their students, but the leadership that they sought to develop among their students was such as to inspire each of their students to surrender their ego—like Krishna who devoted himself to the service of men even in the humble capacity of a charioteer in any crisis facing mankind. It is unnecessary for me to emphasise that the responsibility for guiding the common people lies on the educated, particularly those in whose veins flows youthful blood and in whose hearts there is the undying enthusiasm for making the future bright and happy. I, therefore, consider it a duty of these educational institutions to fill the minds of these future charioteers of society with the belief that the consummation of their life consists in, and only in. their dedication to the task of making human life fruitful and happy.

I think I should, at this moment, make it clear that this ideal differs to a certain extent from the ideal of citizenship. Behind the latter, there always remains a feeling that one should, without considering the rights and wrongs of a question or means, strive to promote and preserve the interests of one's own people, even though by doing so one may be causing injury or loss to the interests of other peoples. Such have not been, however, our traditions or the teachings of our ancestors. We did not think, even for a moment, during the course of our struggle for freedom, to injure the national interests of our alien rulers in order to promote our own interests. Our great leader, Mahatma Gandhi. had always placed before us the ideal of not adopting any means for the realisation of our interests which, from the moral or spiritual point of view, may be in itself an evil. I would, therefore, urge that while it is the duty of every educational institution to awaken the spirit of nationalism in its alumni, it is also its obligation at the same time—and this is much more true of an

institution like yours—that it should fill the hearts and minds of its alumni with the great humanitarian ideal. This ideal which teaches man to look upon every individual as in image of God and to take to his bosom everyone of his fellow-beings without any kind of discrimination. Poet Tulsidas has said, "No one knows in what form God may come to one's door."

This institution is situated in a region every bit of which has been made sacred and glorious by our past history and which has had the glory of keeping the head of our country high even during the greatest of political storms and stresses. Naturally, therefore, it is a special obligation of this college to establish within it a healthy atmosphere for the maintenance of that glory, the preservation of that historic tradition and for the flowering of that ideal of collective service. India's literary heritage can make a great contribution to the creation of such an atmosphere. Our literature is enshrined in the modern Indian languages as also in the two classical languages of India—Sanskrit and Pali. It is extremely rich and its study from the view-point of humanity is as important as study of the literature of non-Indian languages. Its importance lies not only in the fact that, from the strictly artistic point of view, it is of a very high order, but much more in the fact that it is reflected in the daily life of our so-called uneducated common people. There is no part of India which may be unware of the great ideal of charity for which Karna and the love of truth for which Harischandra have become bywords. Notwithstanding the numerous diversities which may be existing in our country today, this fundamental unity has always existed. I believe that it is on account of this unity that our people are a nation in spite of the fact that they have had to pass through innumerable political and economic difficulties and disasters. Naturally, it is a duty of our educational institutions to make their young students familiar with this basic and fundamental unity existing within the hearts of our educated as well as uneducated people.

It may well be that literary works in non-Indian languages may be of a higher order in comparison to those that we have in our languages. But, I am sure no one can deny that it is difficult for our common people to love alien literature which cannot help us to have an adequate idea of the forces operating in the inner consciousness of our people. I believe that we can be votaries of progress only if we can carry our people towards the goals of

economic and cultural prosperity. We will carry our people with us only if we correctly understand and impulses shaping their lives. We can have this understanding of our people by a thorough knowledge of the literature of our country in which throbs the historic mind of our people. I consider it absolutely necessary that the future leaders of our country should be made to cherish a deep love for our literature during their academic career. I would, therefore, like to emphasise the necessity of giving due attention so this matter and of making adequate arrangements for the teaching of our literature in your college.

I have already taken enough time, but, before I conclude, I wish to express my satisfaction for having learnt from your report that your college has been constantly making progress and that its students have been taking active part in serving the people in different spheres of their lives, particularly by taking part in the literacy movement. Even though I may not give you an assurance that, under the existing financial circumstances, my Government would give you any additional financial aid, yet I can say that your efforts to carry on your work with credit and success are duly appreciated. It is my hope that you will ever strive to make this college more useful and popular. It is my prayer to God that He may, in His mercy, give you the strength, the enthusiasm and the wisdom to follow your ideals with success to enable you for many many years, to continue to serve the youth of India.

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THE MISSION OF WOMEN*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I believe that the past and present students of this institution are all very fortunate, for, they have had the opportunity of studying in an institution which was established under the inspiration of a high ideal. We are all aware that there are two kinds of educational institutions in our country—those which were established directly or indirectly by the British Raj and those which were established by patriotic people to awaken national sentiment in our country. The British could dispense power, position and pelf. Naturally, institutions working under the control never had any lack of funds or students. People receiving education there had always an expectation and a belief that after qualifying from there they would be able to secure cushy jobs under the State or to establish themselves in highly profitable vocations. The Government also used to grant them financial aid. On the other hand, institutions established by patriotic people had nothing else than knowledge and nationalism to offer to their *alumni*. So, they were always in financial difficulties and the number of students studying there was also small. The very fact that some of these institutions were able to maintain their glorious existence, in spite of shortcomings and difficulties, shows their great value to the country.

This Vidya Pith is one of such institutions. I think that one of the factors responsible for its success is its Principal, Srimati Mahadevi Verma. There are very few institutions which are being controlled and run by such a talented scholar as Mahadevi Ji. Her

*Address at the Mahila Vidya Pith, Allahabad, on February 20, 1951.

poems, her essays and her philosophical thoughts are invaluable gems of Hindi literature. To have her as a teacher is no ordinary luck. I hope that all her students would for ever feel proud of having had this glorious experience. Their fortune is also enviable for another reason. This Vidya Pith is a point of confluence of the old and the new. Allahabad has been famous for thousands of years as the 'Sangam' of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati. It should be no surprise to find within its bosom, a Vidya Pith which is a 'Sangam' of cultures. This Vidya Pith has neither neglected the past nor has it turned a blind eye to the new. It has accepted both the old and the modern and has brought about a beautiful harmoney between them. It is through this harmony alone that the world of women in our country can be charged with that creative and constructive energy which is so essential for making the life of our people happy and prosperous.

Often, the impatient advocates of progress forget that the collective power of man is, to a very great extent, the gift of the past. In their impatience, some of them begin to think that the supreme success of a revolution lies only in destroying or neglecting the heritage of the past. There can be no greater error than this. With the heritage of the past, and without wasting their time and energy in needless destruction, they can successfully carry through the revolution they desire. It was with the help of the historic heritage of India that Mahatma Gandhi was able to vitalise and activate the slumbering energy of our people. I concede that the past can have a deadening influence on us, but this can happen only when we remain entirely blind to the dynamic nature of life and, therefore, remain indifferent or contemptuous towards new ideas. To remain untouched and unaffected by new ideas is bound to prove extremely injurious and harmful. Man must continue weaving new patterns into the texture of the culture inherited from the past.

The most important creative activity for mankind is the development of man himself. Since the down of history, this has been and still is the task and mission of women. It is they who transmit the heritage of the past to the future generations and it is they who protect this heritage within the realm of family and society. Even when there were no States, no churches and no priests, woman was the protector and the preserver of the social bonds and traditions. If the past, the present and the future were

not linked by her tender body into an organic whole, there would have been neither any civilization nor any history. It is, therefore, all the more necessary for our women to realise their great role in social life.

We are today passing through a period of transition. We have to so organise our life that every individual of our country hears the call of his being and fulfils it. They are many people in our country who are not in a position to have any hopes or expectations. We have to bring about a rapid change in these conditions. Our women have a very great part to play in this connection as the mental and physical contact of women with life is much more lasting and comprehensive than that of men. Not for nothing was it said that 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. In the apron strings of woman is hidden the revolutionary energy which can establish paradise on this earth. Whatever kind of government or economic system we may organise, the empire of true happiness and peace would not be established in this world so long as the mental constitution of the succeeding generation is not properly developed during its period of infancy. For this reason, I believe that much more important work has to be done within the sphere of the family than what is done in offices on factories. I do not, in the least, imply that woman should be a prisoner within the four walls of her house or that she should not have any contact with other aspects of life. On the other hand, I believe that complete freedom of woman is necessary for the progress and health of society. Freedom, however, implies that the best use of freedom is made in promoting the interests of all human beings. The freedom of our women should lie in their assuming the duty and the right of developing the body, the mind and the character of the next generation. Nature has made woman the nurse of the body and the nurse of the spirit. All those evils in our present-day society which prevent our women from carrying on this noble mission should be totally eradicated. The necssary changes must be introduced in our society in order to provide full opportunities for the unrestricted development of our women. Any kind of discrimination made between man and woman would prove fatal to our society. But, women should also understand and recognise their true mission. It is not very dignified on their part to forget this mission and try to get themselves enrolled into the class of exploiters. Women should assume their role as the ministers of the

mind and spirit of men.

It is my belief that this Vidya Pith has been working for the fulfilment of this mission of bringing about a true revolution in human society. For progress towards this goal, it is necessary that this Vidya Pith should include such subjects in its syllabus as would give to its students a clear understanding of the role of woman in the evolution of human civilisation and culture. It should also make provision for such practical training as would enable its students to change the life of the common people of India in a peaceful and creative manner. Women can make the family and communal life of the country a temple of love, co-operation and happiness.

I would like to extend my congratulations to all those students who have passed their examinations in this institution and I wish them all success in their future life.

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EDUCATION OF WOMEN*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

In this country, one of our greatest needs is the spread of education among our women. As a matter of fact there is room for the expansion of education even among men. The condition of women's education is however, such that any attempt at its spread deserves help and encouragement from all quarters. It is, therefore, a matter for congratulation that the efforts of those who started this institution some years ago, have borne fruit. Beginning with eleven, we now have something like 350 students receiving education in this institution. But, what I consider to be a most prominent feature of this institution is the recognition of a separate course for women. We have sometimes misunderstood the difference between man and woman. We sometimes feel that there is no difference even though this would be against the order of Nature. It is universally recognised that there is a certain sphere of work for which women alone are suited. There are other spheres in which women can compete with men and even excel them. Our institutions should, therefore, take particular care of such spheres.

I am glad that this institution has been successfully carrying on its work and is getting encouragement from the Government as well as the public in its work. I have listened with great interest to the very illuminating report about the work of the college which has been read and I am sure, others must also have listened to it with equal interest. As we find, the activities of certain institutions

*Address at the Convocation of the Lady Irwin College, New Delhi, on March 1, 1951.

are to some extent curtailed on account of lack of sufficient funds. In the midst of such difficulties, only a few of them continue to work as this institution has been doing. My own feeling is that, after all, an institution which carries on its work well, somehow or the other gets funds and I do hope that the requirements of this institution will be met. The only thing that has to be done is to make it deserve the help which it requires. I am quite sure that the way in which you are working, entitles your institution to help. I cannot but hope that in due course the Government as well as the charitable-minded people will come forward with the necessary help and remove the difficulties you are now experiencing. I am aware there are not many institutions for imparting education of this kind in the country. If there is one central institution at Delhi, it naturally attracts students from all parts of the country. This institution is, therefore, not looked upon as a local institution of Delhi. Even though this institution is affiliated to the Delhi University, it has an importance of its own because of its peculiarities and deserves help not only from people whose children are receiving education in it but also from others. I, therefore, command this institution to the charitable-minded people as also to the Government so that it may be able to fulfil the trust put into it.

To the students who have passed out and have just got their diplomas, I offer my congratulations. At the same time, I desire to give them some advice also. They go out with a certain prestige attaching to them and with certain responsibilities. They should always remember that in their bearing, in their conduct and in their general life, they have to justify the hopes of those who are running this institution and those who had started this institution. They have to prove to the society at large that they are useful citizens, that they are better citizens than those who have not had the good fortune of receiving education here. They must also feel that their responsibility is all the greater. If they succeed in rising to the expectations, the College will draw a large number of students and get more appreciation from the people. They have, therefore, to justify their merit in the College as well as outside it. Once again, I offer to them my congratulations and thanks.

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EDUCATION TO BUILD CHARACTER*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I have noted from your report that the Agra College is the oldest in Northern India and that it was founded under a pious and charitable endowment. Any work that is undertaken in a spirit of piety and righteousness is bound to succeed. It is the sincerity and high purpose of Pandit Gangadhar Sastry which has flowered into this big institution from which innumerable students have gone out to serve their country. It is really a matter of pride for you to be associated with an institution having such a long and glorious history. I hope that you will continue to be inspired by the high purpose and sincerity with which this institution was originally founded.

I am fully aware of the fact that in the educational system that we have inherited from the past, there is little provision for character building and moral training of students. The result is that even those who are able to make appreciable progress in the development of their mental faculties, are not able to make similar progress in the moral sphere. I do not in the least suggest that the educated people of the present day lack character. What I mean is that if there had been as great a stress on character building as there is on intellectual development, we would have been far ahead of where we are today. A very clear example of the results of pure and high purpose is before you. Mahatma Gandhi

*Translation of speech delivered in Hindi in reply to the address of welcome by the Agra College and the Agra Students' Union on January 29, 1951.

sent a wave of awakening in this country, but he did so by and for dedication to the Truth and the Good. He, no doubt, defined his creed in terms of non-violence and truth but, in fact, it rested on what may be termed, a spiritual vision. It was the spiritual vision which diverted us from our self-seeking pursuits to the path of dedicated service and patriotism. I may add that it is on account of this spirituality that we have been able to achieve success in our own life-time and all our countrymen are able to congratulate themselves on being free citizens.

I would now like to draw your attention to the work that lies ahead. Our generation of older men is now about to pass away and one by one its members are departing. The void thus created has to be filled by the students of the present day. I hold that our generation was really fortunate in having been able to participate in the glorious struggle for the freedom of our country. We did our utmost to win freedom and at long last succeeded. But, this freedom would remain hollow and meaningless if the people of this country are not able to derive the maximum advantage and good out of it. To give substance to our freedom is a great task, indeed, and is in no way less important than the winning of freedom was. Formerly, there was only the alien rule that was to be overcome. The problems that face us today, are many and multitudinous in character. The responsibility of tackling all these complicated problem has fallen on the shoulders of Free India. It is now up to you to solve these problems in a way which may enable our people to hold their heads high. I may, therefore, say that our present task is much more difficult than that of the past.

Our country is very backward from the educational point of view and, consequently, we suffer from a serious handicap in all that we undertake. Inspite of the labours of the British Government and our own during the last three years after the advent of freedom, I am afraid there are hardly 12 to 15 per cent of the people literate in this country. Another problem to which I would like to draw your attention is the existence of many types of diseases and epidemics in this country. These questions and others have to be tackled and solved.

You might be reading in the newspapers, with some pride, about the effort made by our country to preserve international peace. I hope that ultimately our efforts will succeed. One may well wonder, why the nations of the world have regard and respect

for our country in spite of the fact that ours is a poor and economically backward land. In my opinion, it is all due to the fact that we have been trying to follow the path that was laid down for us by Mahatma Gandhi who was almost Divinity incarnate and who had sacrificed himself for our good. If we remain firm and fast to this path and continue to follow in his footsteps, we shall always receive regard and respect. Mahatmaji, in his life-time, insistently denied that he was in any way a supernatural being. He always insisted that he was just like other men and that there was no difference between him and others. Anybody, he said, could be what he was. This is quite true. If one reads his autobiography, one finds that he came across all the difficulties, trials and temptations that befall an ordinary man. He had to face moral perplexities, economic difficulties and, of course, political problems. He solved them all in a selfless spirit. It was because he was able to do so that he became so great and glorious a man. Any one can reach his stature, if he is possessed of a high purpose, spirit of sacrifice and sincerity.

It is my earnest wish that this institution should produce men of high purpose and noble character who may serve the country in the hour of her difficulties and trials. I hope that this college which has been doing such fine service for so many years and which has produced many great men, would continue to serve our people with increasing success. Complete co-operation between the students and the teachers is essential for achieving good results. I do not think that you have invited me today merely in the hope that my visit would facilitate your getting financial support for converting this college into a University, I do not mean that I have no intention of helping you in the matter of funds. I would do what I can. But, at the same time, I want to emphasise that you should learn to stand on your own feet. It would indeed be a great thing if you could do so. Such a spirit of self-reliance would enable you to make an effective contribution towards the progress of the country.

I would like to refer also to the constant criticism of the Government. It may well be that some of the criticism may have some substance. That, there are complaints, no one can deny. If, however, the nature of these complaints were to be examined, it would be found in ultimate analysis that they arise because our people do not have the nobility of character which our countrymen

used to have in former times. I would certainly like people to criticise the Government freely. At the same time, I would urge that before doing so, they should have clear understanding of what the term 'government' really signifies. It is the people's own representatives that constitute the Government today. Naturally, if the representatives are not proper persons, the Government also would not be a desirable one. Improper persons, can be elected as representatives only by people who are themselves suffering from serious defects. It does not behave those who are themselves lacking in moral character to throw the blame of their own shortcomings on the shoulders of others. I would, therefore, say that if there are any faults today, the responsibility for the same lies on every individual. If, however, the people of this country are sound in character and their representatives alone are shirnking their responsibilities, it is for the people themselves to bring them to the right path and to make them fulfil the trust that they have placed in them. I mean that the defect today is in our own character.

Whenever I get an opportunity, I make it plain that our country needs minds of a very high order. Our country had produced talented people even when it was in bondage. It is true that our students have been securing the highest positions in their examination results even in foreign lands and have thus acquired high merit in foreign universities. India does not lack brain power nor is it backward in games and sports. I understand that the Indian hockey team which went on a tour of foreign countries never sustained a defeat anywhere in those countries. Our country has thus made progress and earned a name for itself in these spheres. In the moral sphere, in comparison, we find ourselves lagging behind others and in any case much more backward than our ancestors. We learn from the descriptions left by ancient Greek travellers that the people of this country were not in the habit of looking their doors. Those of us who might have gone to the hills might be knowing that even today there is a similar custom prevalent there. The traders just put a piece of stone on their merchandise when they have to leave it unattended and they find it completely intact when they return. Today, unfortunately we find that black-marketing is rampant and none of us has the least hesitation in taking a larger quantity of rations than what one is strictly entitled to. I do not think that it is

legitimate to say that all this is due to the weaknesses of Government officials. My view is that the producers, the distributors and the consumers alike are at fault. The difficulties from which we are suffering today are the product of our own moral shortcomings. I would, therefore, urge you to develop your moral character side by side with the development of your mind and body so that no one in the world may dare to point the finger of scorn at us. I hope that you would be giving the same earnest attention to this question as you have given to organising these celebrations today or to extending a welcome to me.

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THE DEFECTS IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I would like you, the Graduates, who are about to enter the wider sphere of life after qualifying from this University, to remember that you are taking this step at a time when our country is facing extremely complicated problems and difficulties, for the solution of which we require all the care and caution that we can possibly command. The necessity for caution and co-operation on our part has become all the greater on account of the death of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. We were till now under his benign guardianship and had full confidence that he would be able to steer us safely through all the shoals and racks of trials and tribulations. He had unceasingly devoted all his energy and time to the service of the people throughout the last thirty-two years and was, in fact, the most eminent and prominent captain of our War of Independence. Mahatma Gandhi, with his message of 'satyagraha', had awakened the Indian people from their age-long slumber and had inspired them to enter the War of Independence, finally leading them to victory by his unique weapon. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the most brilliant and successful commanders of this army of patriots. It was behind him that we continued to advance with confidence and courage in the field of battle till the day arrived when we were able to win

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our independence. He not only freed the country from its bondage, but also, like Chandragupta Maurya, united it under one single administration and thus gave to it a power and vitality which it did not possess in the past, even in the days of its highest political glory. The responsibilities that have fallen on us on account of the departure from our midst of such an unrivalled soldier and statesman are not small or simple in any measure. He was busy in the task of recreating our country and consolidating our unity after the advent of freedom but, unfortunately, he was not able to finish it before he was taken away from us. That task has yet to be completed. It is the special responsibility of the youth of this country and particularly of the educated amongst them to complete it successfully. It is at times like these that the mettle of men is tested. Your education and training would have no meaning for you or for your country until you are able to fulfil your obligations and duties which you owe to the Goddess Saraswati. Saraswati is but the creative energy of Brahma, whom the Lord of the Universe is always pursuing. Naturally, therefore, all those who have succeeded in winning the boons and blessings of Saraswati have the supreme duty of dedicating themselves to the sacred task of creating the world anew. It is also the duty of the Universities to awaken this spirit of service and the urge for creation in the hearts of their students and to make them dedicated servants of humanity who would consider it their supreme obligation to free human life from all its obstacles and maladies, all its shortcomings, failures and frustrations; to develop in them the feeling and faith that it is their duty to consume themselves in the fulfilment of this noble mission by the creation of a new cultural and economic order.

It is only recently that we attained our freedom and that also in a unique manner. Countries in which a revolution is carried out through violence provide a clear field of action for revolutionaries who can carry through radical changes in the social and other spheres of life within a short time. This is particularly the case when they do not suffer from any ideological or moral scruples with regard to the means they adopt for achieving their ends. We, however, followed only the path of non-violence in securing our freedom. Even though it cannot be said that we have remained faithful and true to it to the same extent after achieving freedom as we had been before, yet it has

not been possible for us to carry through a revolutionary transformation of the kind which is possible for the type of revolutionaries to whom I have already made a reference. We inherited a running administration and we have not been able to free ourselves from its inter-tangled web of numerous limitations and regulations. We have, therefore, to pause and ponder before we can take a single step. We have to consider the ways in which we can realise our aims and fulfil our objectives without in any way breaking this administrative machine. This is neither the time nor the place for us to examine as to how far we are still firmly loyal to the fundamental principles which Gandhiji had placed before us and the world. But here, I would like to draw the attention of the scholars and educationists to only one of his principles, for it is in the light of that principle that we, in this assemblage of scholars and students, have to deliberate upon subjects of educational importance and to discover the means whereby we can make this educational machinery serve our purpose. We have to examine the real aims of all the institutions into which the different aspects of our life are woven and to discover what changes in the character and constitution of each of such institutions are necessary in the changed circumstances of today in order that they may be able to fulfil these aims and purposes. We are today in a situation in which an owner of a factory finds himself when he comes into the possession of a running factory which has been installed with great labour and expenditure and which is making, with some success. the articles for the manufacture of which it has been set up. We have to find out the way in which, with the least possible change and the least amount of investment of capital we can enlarge and renew this factory in order to manufacture the new article that we need. Education may be compared, in any opinion, to a basic industry, the products of which are needed by all of our industries. The other industries would succeed or fail as this basic industry succeeds or fails. It is for this reason that we have to give very careful consideration to its objectives, its machinery and its system before we can finally accept them and, if necessary, we have to make such changes in any or all of them as seem to be desirable. It is my feeling that the kind of goods that used to be turned out by this factory will not prove very helpful to us any more. We have, therefore, to start producing a new type of goods in this

factory.

The system, the medium and the course of education were probably useful and appropriate under the circumstances of the age when they were established by the founders of the present edcational system. But, they do not fit in with the circumstances of the present day and, therefore, a basic and fundamental change in them appear to be necessary. To say that the English rulers had given special importance to two objectives in devising this educational system is neither to blame them nor to cast an aspersion on them. They wanted that the educational system should prepare such people as could assist them in administering the country. They had the firm faith and conviction that the literature, their institutions and their culture were superior and richer to those of this country. They naturally felt it their duty to promote and spread these in our country and it may be said that they really believed that by doing so they would be doing good to our people. It was but natural for them to hold that belief for they were familiar only with their own culture. Moreover, though few in number, they had succeeded in bringing under their sovereignty and dominion the teeming millions of this country as we did not have the power, intelligence or ability to enter into competition with them or to struggle against them. They, therefore, deemed it proper and necessary to propagate and popularise their language, their literature and their institutions. Today, however, we have to make up an account of this system to us and also examine as to how far we can continue to make use of it in future.

It is quite plain that the foundation of the present educational system were laid to produce administrative officials for the British Government and, therefore, in the syllabus and courses of study prescribed in our Universities, not much attention has been paid to the all-round progress of our country. The first feature of this system was that an alien language had been made the medium of education. This enabled the production of a class of people who could assist the English administrators, through their knowledge of the English language, in running the administration of the country. Thus, there was hardly any necessity for the latter to study the language and literature of this country, during the period of their administrative service and they were freed from all the trouble attendant upon the learning of a foreign language or

the study of an alien literature. It is unnecessary for me to reiterate what is now acknowledged by all educationists, scholars and administrators that education imparted through the medium of the mother-tongue proves most beneficial to the child and to the development of its mind and character. Thus, while we have, no doubt, learned and benefitted greatly from the study of English literature, yet there cannot be any doubt that we have lost our creative energy and have become mentally paralysed to a very great extent as a result of having had to learn everything through English. I remember in this connection an incident that occurred in 1921 and which made me a thorough believer of national education, that is to say, the principle of imparting education through the medium of the mother-tongue. In those days the boycott movement of educational institutions established or aided by the Government was at its height. I was touring Orissa with Gandhiji. An aged gentleman put a question to Mahatmaji at a mass meeting. He asked Gandhiji why he wanted the educational institutions to be boycotted when, as a matter of fact, the whole freedom movement was but an outcome of that educational system. He asked whether it was not a fact that such talented people as Lokmanya Tilak and Gandhiji himself were the products of that system. Mahatmaji countered the question by asking whether it was not a fact that there had been only one talented person like Lokmanya Tilak even though the system of English education had been in existence for many years. He added that if the matter were carefully considered it would appear that Lokmanya Tilak could stand no comparison from the point of view of talent to those great souls who had appeared in our past history. Even if the great 'rishis', about whom we do not know much, were not taken into consideration, yet could it be said that any one in India under British rule could be compared from the point of view of his genius and abilities to such giants as Gautama Buddha, Shankara and even to Tulsidas and Kabirdas who lived just before English rule began in this country ? Moreover, who could be sure that if Lokmanya Tilak had not had to suffer from the limitations and the burdens of a foreign medium of instruction he would not have proved a much greater man ? He, therefore, was of the opinion that whatever talents our people had exhibited after receiving English education had been acquired not on account of but in spite of it. I wholly subscribe to this view and

it is my unshakable conviction that it is absolutely necessary for our development and the realisation of the creative energy in us that our own language should be the medium of education. Another fact that shows clearly that the foreign language was a crushing load on our minds is that in spite of the continued existence of this educational system for the last many years, our people made very little contribution to modern knowledge and science; but from the day the national movement began to gather momentum, our intellectual powers began to grow and develop not only in the sphere of politics but also in the other branches of knowledge.

The burden of a foreign tongue that was imposed on us by this system of education is not its only defect. Even though it had been established with the belief that our indigenous culture was devoid of all sciences, practically no place was provided in the syllabus of the educational institutions of modern sciences, crafts and technology. During the last two hundred year, the new science has given to the world many great and glorious things; people are still witnessing its miracles and also enjoying its blessings or suffering its curses. The present English system of education was established in this country more than a hundred years ago and some of our older Universities have also completed a hundred years of their existence. During the first fifty years, there was no place for science in the syllabus of the educational institutions. Here and there, a few small medical or engineering colleges had been established for the simple reason that the engineering colleges had been established for the simple reason that the administration neede some students trained in those branches of knowledge also; but, as many more people were needed for the offices and courts, only such subjects found their place in the syllabus as were considered necessary and appropriate for training people of the latter type. I am not aware if, in this mainly agricultural country, there was a single institution during the first fifty years of the existence of this system, which taught subjects having relation to agriculture or otherwise imparted agricultural training to the people.

The most revolutionary contribution that Europe has made to the modern world is the present industrial system and the introduction of mechanical power. It is a little more than 150 years ago that the industrial revolution began in England.

The river of wealth that flowed from India to England, at the time, enabled the English people to forge far ahead of other European nations in the industrial field. But, no education was imparted in our schools and colleges which could promote such industrial development in our country. Even though the number of colleges and universities is daily multiplying nowadays and even though many of them realize the great importance of industrialisation, yet not even an ordinary, leave alone an adequate place, has been given in the syllabus of such institutions to subjects which can help industrialisation.

I can quite understand why no emphasis was placed by the English administrators on such subjects in those days. They wanted their industries to flourish and considered our country as a marked for supplying raw materials to their factories and for consuming their manufactured goods. When, after the War, English factories began to suffer from a scarcity of cotton, attempts began to be made in our country to grow cotton, so that it could prove useful and profitable to English factories. What I mean to say is that this educational system was not only a burden on the memorizing faculties of our young people but that its aims had been conceived paimarily in the interests of the British Empire. The consequence of all this was that in modern scientific knowledge and industries, we are lagging far behind the other countries of the world even today. It is quite irrelevant here for me to consider the question whether large-scale industrialisation is desirable for our country or not, It is a different subject altogether and there is much difference of opinion on it. This question, however, is irrelevant for our present purposes for the simple reason that those who were the sponsors and the founders of this system, instead of being hostile, were, in fact the strongest and the stoutest supporters of modern European institutions and social organisations. They did not, however, care to promote the industrialisation of this country nor did they shape the educational system so as to help that process.

Whatever be the view-point from which we examine the present educational system in our country, it is evident that it stands in need of fundamental and basic changes. I, therefore, consider it the duty of all universities and other educational institutions to change their mental outlook and their syllabus and medium of instruction.

I do not think that it is necessary for me to explain at length the importance of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction to the member of this University, because you have already accepted its utility in principle and have also taken steps to give that principle a practical form. I would like to congratulate you on this courageous move and I hope that you will always remain firm in your purpose and would achieve success by surmounting all the obstacles and difficulties that you may have to encounter. Thus you will convince even those who are sceptical today of the great capacity and utility of Indian languages as medium of education. I think that for achieving success in this direction, two kinds of steps are necessary. In the first place, you have to prepare and popularise a lexicon of such terms as our languages either did not have, or, if they had, the terms were not sufficiently popular for expressing the ideas of such scientific subjects as are entirely new to us. I find that even in this direction your University and Government have been active and I would like to congratulate you all for that as well. The other say that seems to be necessary is that the syllabus as well as the educational method of our institutions should be appropriately changed. I am afraid that necessary steps in this direction are not being taken as yet and I would like not only this University but other Universities as well to pay adequate attention to this problem.

Learning has a great value. It has a fundamental importance for the development of mind, body and morality and, in our own times, even for the economic life of man. It is, therefore, necessary that whatever resources of education are available in any country should be such as enable the students to make an all round progress. Even if we consider other matters to be of secondary importance and hold that only such knowledge as has an economic value is to be preferred, the present educational system needs a radical alternation. The system that exists at present divides our people into water-tight compartments of the educated and the uneducated and there is no common ground between the two. The style of living of the educated classes has become appreciatively expensive and their needs are of such a charater as cannot be satisfied in villages, with the consequence that people of the educated classes have practically all moved into the cities for setting there and the villages are thus losing the benefit of their knowledge and experience. While on the one

hand, life has become more expensive as a result of this system, on the other, it has not led to a corresponding increase in the ability of the educated to create wealth. It may well be that the educated people may be acquiring an added power to take away from others the lion's share of what the latter produce. It is evident that such a power cannot lead to the abolition of poverty in the country nor can it and even a pie to our national wealth, which would be possible only when education leads to an increase in the productive power of the country. As things stand today, only such people derive any benefit from it as are able for one reason or the other and in one form or the other, to take a share out of the wealth produced by others; but the total national wealth remains what it has been. If this has any effect on society, it is a harmful one. When the producers see that the produce of their toil goes to others, they lose all incentive tn produce more wealth which in its turn causes economic loss to the whole country. I would, therefore, urge that our educational system should be such as imparts knowledge of the subjects by virtue of which our educated people would not only be enabled to share in the wealth produced by other but also to make their contribution in increasing the total national wealth. It is an admitted truth that a person who receives modern education, no longer remains fit for the type of work that his parents were doing to earn their livelihood. Thus, the son of a peasant does not become a better peasant by virtue of this type of education. On the contrary, he feels a sense of humilitation in holding the plough or otherwise performing any physical labour. Similarly, the son of a carpenter feets no inclination after receiving education of this type to carry on his ancestral vocation. The mere fact of having been educated renders persons incapable of or disinclined to physical labour and produces in them a disrespect for all other types of work except those which involve the use only of the pen or the tongue. In proposing that basic education should be imparted through any craft or industry, Mahatma Gandhi had not only the idea that thereby education would be imparted in a better way, but had also in view the consideration that dignity of physical labour should be re-established and the feeling of contempt that accompanied it, should disappear. My belief is that this proposal is useful not only from the view-point that if worked properly it would make education pay its own way and make it quite cheap, but also

becaused it would go a long way in reforming the lives of our educated people and in creating an educated class which would share what others produce by the sweat of their brow and also add to the national wealth.

Considering the swift progress that is being made in the world in the industrial sphere through the application of modern science, and India's need to secure a respectable position for itself in that sphere, it has become absolutely necessary that our whole educational system should be reorientated. Instead of laying emphasis on pure learning only, we have to discover a way whereby we may be in a position to remove the gulf that has opened and is widening daily between the life of the eity and the life of the village. I find that new schools, colleges and universities are being established and the number of students in them is increasing very quickly. But, I am not certain whether all these would prove as useful as they should, for I find that in almost all of them the same old methods and syllabi of education are being adopted. I would like that whenever a proposal or a demand is made for the establishment of a new educational institution, full consideration be given to the question whether any purpose would be served by beating the old path or following the old trail. If it be found that the old way can be of no use, it should be considered as to what new way can be adopted that would make a new educational institution a useful one.

The University Commission has suggested the establishment of rural universities. We have also before us the plan for education proposed by Gandhiji. Are we to remain slaves of the past practices even when these schemes and proposals are before us ? My feeling is that our educational system would serve its true purpose only if it is integrated with the whole life of the Indian people instead of being merely related to the administrative system as it has been so far. Integration implies, in the first instance, that such subjects should be taught in our Universities as would directly promote the economic development of our country. Everybody knows that agriculture is the basis of our economic structure. Whatever may be the industrial progress of our country in the future and I think it should and must be an all-round one, I am convinced that agriculture must continue to be our main and most important indusiry. If I am right in this view, it is evident that our educational system should give a very important place to

and lay the main emphasis on agronomy and other science related to agriculture. If we examine the syllabi of the Universities, we find that agriculture and related sciences find a secondary place in them. What an irony it is that in an agricultural country like India, there should be almost a complete lack of agricultural education ! One of the main reasons why our country has a deficit in food and why our agriculture is not profitable is, that there has been a great neglect of modern agricultural education in our country. Whatever little arrangement exists today is also such as does not create any interest among the students for agricultural work, but only makes them fit for filling some place in the administrative machinery of the Government. If our agricultural education is to be of any use, it is necessary that it should be in our own language and in terms of the conditions of our country; above all it should be much less expensive than it is today. It is only then that it would directly lead to the improvement of our agriculture. Similarly, I believe that there should be some arrangement in our educational institutions for textile education. I would not like to go into more details in this connection and would content myself by suggesting that there should be a close relationship between the syllabi of our educational institutions and the economic life of our country.

The second point on which I would like to lay emhasis is that our educational institutions should posses statistics which can provide necessary information as to how many educated workers are required in any particular economic sphere and, on the basis of this knowledge, educational institutions should guide students to make a choice of subjects that they are to study there. I think this could be conveniently arranged if there were a close liasion between the educational institutions—particularly the Universities—and the organisations of industry, public service and agriculture existing within any State. I believe that if students could get such guidance in their educational institutions, much of the time and energy that they have now to waste uselessly would be utilised to good purpose. It often happens these days that a student passes a good part of his life in studying a subject which proves of no use whatever to him after he has completed his education. If, however, education is imparted under a plan of this type, much of the energy of the youth and the money of the country would be saved from being wasted.

The third point which needs emphasis is that educational institutions should create in their alumni a faith that the purpose of education is creation rather than enjoyment or ostentation. Till the present day, the educated classes have been taking their education as an adornment given to them by Saraswati or a pleasant boon of the Goddess Lakshmi. There are many among them who still believe that the only purpose of education is to provide a person with what is termed 'good form.' They treat education as a kind of ornament that adds to their spiritual beauty; and even through this view has some truth in it, yet I do not consider it to be wholly correct. It no doubt emphasises rightly that education teaches as individual to sublimate his natural instincts and propensities and to make the world of nature more beautiful, useful and richer than what it is, by his own creative activities. While this view has this truth, there is also a danger lurking within it—the danger that the educated people may begin to treat themselves as a separate privileged class. It is no doubt true that knowledge gives a higher and better life to man but this does not mean that the educated person, by virtue of this new birth of the spirit within him, should take his seat on Olympian hights and look down upon other men with contempt. The educated should, on the other hand, always remember that they were able to worship at the shrine of Saraswati merely because of the liberality and generosity of the common people and therefore they should treat their education as a trust placed in their hands by their ancestors and contemporaries—a trust which they have to return to their follow being with added interest. I would therefore urge that education, instead of being treated as an ornament, should be considered as the badge of service. Similarly, I urge that education should not be treated as an instrument for self-gratification. In other words, I insist that the educated people should not demand a big share out of the national wealth merely because they are educated. Every educated man should, on the other hand, realise that he can claim a share in the national wealth only when, by virtue of his knowledge, he has brought about any cultural or economic progress of his countrymen. I, therefore, feel that it is the duty of the Universities, as also of the educational institutions, to develop a faith in their alumni that knowledge is but another name for the creative energy of man and that so long as they do not devote their life to creative purposes, they would not

be remaining either loyal to their knowledge or to their ideals.

I would urge you, educated young men and women, to recognise the obligations and the duties which knowledge has laid on you. It may well be that in fulfilling there obligations you may have to encounter numerous difficulties and troubles. It may also be that in discharging these responsibilities, you may remain bereft of the boons of Lakshmi. But, you must always remember that your life would be prosperous only when the country is prosperous. You would be failing in your obligations to your knowledge if, at any time, you desire your own prosperity though your country is poverty-striken. By doing so, you would become one of those who, for their own aggrandisement, are ready and willing to trample upon the good of others. I am confident that your sentiments and idealism would not permit you ever to adopt this course. I would, therefore, ask you to make a firm resolve that you would remain dedicated to such creative purposes as serve the economic and cultural increests of the country and that you would sacrifice all your personal enjoyment till your country is prosperous and flourishing.

Since unknown ages, Man has been guiding generation after generation with the torch of knowledge. He holds it aloft in his hands so long as there is life in his body; at the moment when he is to fall into eternal sleep, he hands it over to other powerful and eager hands. This University has placed the torch of knowledge in your hands for you to join this race. It is your paramount duty to keep it ever alight and burning and to go on marching ahead, lighting the mysterious darkness of the future, so long as there is a life in you and to hand it over at last to posterity. This is a great responsibility that you hold and it is my prayer that God may give you success in fulfilling it.

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EDUCATION NEEDS REFORM*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I am very pleased to lay the foundation-stone of the new building for the Ramjas College. It is an opportunity which I could not have missed. As has been said, Lala Kedar Nath had dedicated his life, after retirement, to the service of this and other institutions associated with it. Not only this, but he used to give away even his pension to the students for whose benefit he had started these institutions. Himself, he lived on the kind bounty of one of his friends. You have observed that the foundation of this institution has been well-laid today, but to me it appears that it was well-laid on the day when Lala Kedar Nath had taken up this mission with a great faith and in a spirit of sacrifice. Any work that is taken in hand with conviction and confidence, sincerity and determination, is bound to be successfully completed.

The institution which had begun merely as a school has grown into a big college and has multiplied into several schools for boys and girls. I hope they would continue to grow still further now that it is being moved into the University area. I believe that this phenomental growth is the outcome of the promise which Lala Kedar Nath had made to his father. He had promised to win for him the love and affection of hundreds of children in return for the one child that he had lost. Lala Kedar Nath acted on his word with determination and wisdom. It was his labours that

*Speech delivered on the occasion of the foundation-stone-laying ceremony of the Ramjas College in the University Enclave on January 17, 1951.

made it possible for us to see this day—the laying of the foundation-stone of this new building.

It is my conviction that our present educational system needs reform in several directions. One of the needed reforms to which I would like to draw your attention is that the system should be such as may develop a spirit of co-operation and friendliness among the students for their countrymen. At present, I find that the educational system creates a spirit of separatism and snobbishness. Lala Kedar Nath had well realised this and it was for this reason that he used to live with the students and share in their joys and sorrows, their studies and sports. By this simple life, he placed before the students an illustrious example.

I hope that the institution, whose foundation-stone is now being laid in the University area, would be able to have greater achievements to its credit than other institutions. As the Principal has already said in his speech, this institution has made a name for itself in the academic sphere as also in the sphere of sports. I hope that it would continue to maintain the tradition of high thinking and simple living which its founder had given to it. I believe that India as also the world stands in great need of such a tradition. Let me hope that this institution will set an example to other universities and colleges by producing worthy young men and women. I am sure that the mission which had been undertaken by Lala Kedar Nath with devotion and faith and which you are now carrying out, would certainly be fulfilled and that you shall never have to face any financial stringency whereby your work may be hampered. Many people would come to your aid seeing the great and good work that you are doing. May this institution continue to flourish more and more is my prayer.

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EDUCATION AND OUR PRESENT NEEDS*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I must, at the very outset, express my sense of obligation to you for having afforded me this opportunity of addressing a few words to the graduates who, after qualifying from this University, are about to assume the responsibilities of life. At the present moment, both India and the world are faced with very difficult and complicated problems for the solution of which, both the experience and the sobriety of the elders and the irrepressible enthusiasm, burning hopes, aspirations and energy of youth are needed. It is no exaggeration to say that the responsibility for rebuilding the world lies mainly on their shoulders. It is also quite evident that it is in their own interest to take up this task of reconstruction with a strong determination. Their success in life will depend mostly on the eagerness and skill with which they set themselves to the task.

It is your good fortune that you were able to make your mental and moral preparation for shouldering this responsibility in this University. It is a universally accepted truth that students unconsciously and, as a matter of course, derive as much knowledge from their social and cultural environment as they do from the lectures of their professors and from their text books. The richer this environment is, the more cultured and civilised does the life of the students become. Naturally, the boys and girls of this University must have derived an invaluable cultural benefit by

*Address delivered in Hindi at the Twenty-Eighth Convocation of the University of Delhi on December 9, 1950.

having lived and studied here, for, the environment of Delhi has some special qualities which are not to be found elsewhere. It is an incontrovertible truth that every nook and corner of this great city of Delhi reflects history. The echoes of the centuries reverberate in the historic ruins in its environs. There are, no doubt, many cities of great historic importance in India, but among them all, Delhi is unique. It is the meeting point of three important currents of history which, after originating in different places of the world have joined, in this historic city, to become one current which enriches and would continue to enrich the cultural life of the Indian people. The most ancient and undoubtedly the main current is the one which has been flowing from Vedic times (or perhaps even before) in our country and the life-giving waters of which have been satisfying the spiritual thirst of our people through all these centuries. It has enriched our life by inspiring it with lofty ideals, associated with great names which have become by-words in our sacred literature and ancient history. A synonym for faithfullness is Harishchandra; for sacrifice, Dadhichi; for surpassing pity, Shivi; for charity, Karna; for statesmanship, Rama; for disinterested service, Krishna; for *ahimsa*, the Buddha; and for '*dharma chakra*', Asoka. There is not a single aspect of our life into which the ennobling and enriching affects of this current have not penetrated and it would not be an exaggeration to say, that, consciously or unconsciously, it is determining the direction of our life and thoughts even today. The other current is the one which had its source in Arabia and reached India about a thousand years ago. Flowing through the centuries, it joined with the first current. In this very city was born the composite language, dress, art, literature and ideology which are now the common property of the Hindus and the Muslims. It gave us Kabir's *Anhad Nad* or the 'Music of the Universe' as also Jayasi's love epic. It also gave us in marble the Taj—in eternal, unchanging from—the great sorrow of Shahjahan. Similarly, a few centuries ago, the third current came to our country from the distant West and mingled its waters with the others in Delhi. It has activated our life, enlarged its dimensions and given it a new pattern by means of modern science. In this way, each of these currents has enriched and ennabled our culture. You have had occusion to live and study at the confluence of these historic currents and naturally must have had the opportunity of immersing

deep into their life-giving waters. At least, let me hope that you have fully availed yourself of that opportunity.

Delhi is the confluence point not only of these currents of history but also of the currents of people coming from different regions. People from all parts of India are settled here, so much so that there is not a single region or State of India whose domiciled citizens are not to be found in Delhi. It would not be incorrect to say that if any one wants to have a bird's eye view of our multi-lingual country with its many diversities, it would be sufficient for him to have a glimpse of Delhi, for, it is in every sense a microcosm of India. Such a person would find here every phase of India—the old and the new; the North and the South; the East and the West. This is not all. Recently, during the last three years one has come into contact, in this city of Delhi, not only with people from different parts of India but also of America, Russia, England, China, France, Burma and other countries of the world. Thus, Delhi is a city having a cosmopolitan culture and society. You too must have come into close contact with people of different regions of India and of the world by virtue of your having lived and studied in this city. Naturally, you must have had a practical realisation as to how necessary it is for the future of our country that these three currents of history should flow unitedly in order to carry life and vitality to every one of our villages and cities, our homes and factories. You must have also clearly understood the great necessity of a unifying bond among persons of the different regions and communities of India which, though thinner than air, should be stronger than steel. I feel very strongly that we are face to face with the twin problems of cultural and regional harmoney and we have to solve them with all the earnestness and care that we can command. It is my feeling that a university like that of Delhi and its students and graduates can play a very important role in the solution of this problem. It is needless for me to say that the University of Delhi has the same composite form and character as Delhi, because it is the cultural centre of the city. This University has students coming from all parts of India. Again, there are in it young men and women affected by one or more currents of history—it has people with both old and new-fangled ideas. Naturally, there is the problem of establishing harmony in the life and mental outlook of its students, belonging as they do to different cultures and traditions and different communities. Moreover, it is its responsibility to send

young men and women who have achieved an integral harmoney, as pioneers and soldiers of cultural and regional harmony to every parts of India. This is the duty of this University as also of other universities of India, not merely for the sake of their internal harmony and smooth working but also for discharging their obligations as educational institutions.

The main object of education, in my opinion, is the establishment of a two-fold harmony in every individual—harmony within his own self and harmony with other living beings in the whole world. It is no doubt true that in appearance every individual human being appears to be a single personality for the simple reason that we do not see him having two faces or eight hands and feet. But if the inner structure of an apparently single personality is examined, it would be found that instead of there being one, there are several beings in it. Our ancestors had imagined *Devas*, *Asuras* and human beings having ten, five or four heads. That was not a mere fantasy devoid of all reality. Behind it, there was the great psychological truth that in every individual, however, well-integrated he may appear on the surface, there is always the possibility of there being a number of different personalities. This possibility arises simply because there does not exist a permanent and unbreakable natural harmony between the reason, the will and the physical appetites of an individual. Harmony in these different aspects of personality is brought about though training and knowledge. The establishment of such a harmony through knowledge, action and love used to be termed as *Yoga* in our country. It must also be remembered that harmony once established by means of *Yoga* is not established for ever. The *Yogi* has to be ever vigilant to maintain this harmony though hard discipline and perserverance. If he fails to remain alert and vigilant even for a single moment he may lose all that he may have achieved though the hard labours of a life-time and may find himself in the grip of the Devil. It was for this reason that there was a saying in this country that it is either the *Yogi* or the *Bhogi* who remains awake and sleepless. The truth is that the *Yogi* never sleeps for he has to remain ever awake and alert in order that this inner spiritual harmony, by virtue of which alone his life finds fulfilment and he himself acquires perennial bliss and knowledge of the truth, should not break even for a moment. I believe that what was termed *Yoga* by our ancestors is what the universities

have to provide to their students at the present time, for even modern educationists admit that the object of education is the establishment of a complete inner harmony so that there should not remain any split personality in the individual.

The danger of such a split personality exists ordinarily in every society and community, but it is much greater in a society in which there are several cultures, historical traditions and social systems. As I have already said, these diversities exist in our country and consequently there is very danger before us that the personalities of millions of our countrymen may remain split and dissociated. As long as that is the case, our society and country would remain a victim of internal jealousies, dissensions and differences and thus would not be in a position to achieve progress and prosperity. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for us that we should take immediate steps to free our country from this danger as early as possible. It is, of course, very plain that this danger cannot be eliminated by the policeman's baton or the soldier's bayonet, nor can it be eliminated by means of the law or law courts. If it can be eliminated at all, it is only through good education and this can be done only by our universities. Unfortunately, however, the universities which exist in our country were established as a time when the aim of education was considered to to be such knowledge of the English language, literature and law as could enable the educated people to find service in offices or to practise law in the courts. It was for this reason that in almost all the Indian Universities, English was kept as the medium of instruction and English literature as a compulsory subject. It is really an irony of history that the literature of our own country was an optional subject, while the literature of England was a compulsory subject for us. There has been practically no change in this respect even today. In most of the Universities, Englisb language and English literature continue to be compulsory subjects. I have absolutely no prejudice against English nor am I indifferent to the beauty of English literature. I myself, in my student days, thought it proper to study for the highest degree in the English language and literature. Whatever beauty they may possess, nobody can deny the fact that the result of people being compelled to study them compulsorily, while being permitted to remain ignorant of and indifferent to their own literature, has led to the development of the cramming habit among our students. There

has been a long-standing complaint that they are habituated to cramming. But, I do not think that this is so because of any radical difference in their mental or physical make up as compared to that of the young men of other countries. I think that it was due to there being no harmony or contact between the education imparted in the Universities and their daily life that these students became strangers to their own traditional beliefs and their own culture and language. These Universities were undoubtedly situated physically on the land and under the sky of India, but in their spirit, they had more in common with England or Europe than with India. What was taught to them in these places had absolutely no relevance to their home or to the life of their country. Consequently, it was not possible for them to remember their lessons as a matter of course and with ease. They had to stuff their minds with strange knowledge by a kind of violent effort. Naturally, they could not but take to cramming. The inevitable result of this practice was that they lost that creative power and that self-confidence which had enabled Indians for centuries past to make valuable and unrivalled contributions in the spheres of science, literature, art and religion. It was by virtue of these that they had carried the message of Indian culture and religion to every corner of the great continent of Asia and to distant lands across the seas at a time when there were no safe and easy means of communication, nor such effective instruments of propaganda as man has at his disposal today.

As a consequence of this alien system of education, our educated people began to have split personalities, so much so that they could not see any other purpose in their lives except that of mere living. No one can compute the great cultural loss our country has to suffer on account of this purposelessness. It may appear at first sight rather surprising that quite a good number of the English members of the Indian Civil Service could find time, in spite of their heavy official duties, to devote, themselves to the writing of books on history, political economy and other social sciences, while, with a few honourable exceptions, hardly and Indian in the same service had any interest of that kind. I think that this was due mainly to the fact that these English Civilians did not suffer from split personalities as did the Indians and, in any case, not to the same extent as the latter and consequently they were not subject to the mental inertia of which the

Indians were victims. Whereas, it should have been the function of our Universities to bring about the development of harmonious personalities in our people, they continued to cut them into parts by their insistence on the English language and literatue and by the neglect of whatever was Indian. Naturally and invitably, this led to the rise a class of Indians which, while living on the soil of India, yet lived in an atmosphere which was English, so much so that even its family lise, its language of speech, correspondence and study and its made of dining and dressing became foreign. Having been more or less completely Anglicised, these people did not suffer to the same extent from the split personality that used to develop among other educated people. However, even they did remain entirely free from this evil.

Besides the loss that our people have had to suffer in the intellectual sphere on account of this kind of education, there was also a heavy loss in the social sphere. The people educated in these Universities came to develop a kind of indifference, if not contempt, for those Indians who had remained entirely unacquainted with English literature and culture. The result was that in every city of India, a kind of cultural wall began to arise, on one side of which lived the spiritual children of England and on the other the people of India. These cities were already divided into the worlds of the rich and the poor, but now came to be divided also into the worlds of the English-educated and the non-English-eduated. The result was that the collective endeavours and efforts towards a common good, which could otherwise have been made, were no longer possible. Moreover, suspicion and jealousy began to arise between the people living on both sides of this wall. There also developed a tendency among them, to mock and ridicule the people living on the other side. While the life of the city thus came to be divided, the life of the village was practically rained as a result of this system. It was plain that the number of people who had taken to English ways of life could not be large in the villages, for the simple reason that such a mode of living involves heavy expenses and the people of the rural areas did not have any surplus money. Moreover, the villages did not have the facilities and amenities which our English-educated people considered necessary. The natural consequence was that the bond between educated India and

village India went on loosening. Such a gulf had never before arisen between the urban and the rural populations in the history of India. In the past, learned people used to visit the villages and many of them even lived there. The life of the rural areas used to be on quite a good level of culture and civilisation on account of its contact with the intellectuals of the age and a result of the recitation of stories from sacred literature. Naturally, therefore, there was no big gulf between village culture and city culture. There could be inter-dining and inter-marriage between the people of the villages and the people of the cities as there was no difference in the style of living, dressing and dining. If a city girl was married into a rural family, she did not have to face any kind of discomfort or inconvenience because of the difference in the mode of living of her parents and her husband's family. But, during the British period, the cultural gulf between the city and the village widened to such an extent that if a girl from a city were to be married into a village family, she would have to face any amount of inconvenience and discomfort due to cultural disparity. The bonds that subsisted between the village and the city began to weaken all the more and a situation arose when the only relation the remained between the two was that the village people went to the city to sell their produce and to bring back cloth or money from there. This widening gulf between the city and the village weakened the country all the more. Another loss which the village suffered on account of this system of education was that all the capable and skilled people of the villages began to desert their homes and settle in the cities. A talented yong man from a village, who was able to acquire English education, was so steeped in the English way of life that he could not even think of living any more in his former surroundings. The result of all this was that the universities became a kind of blotting paper for soaking all village talent. Only such persons continued to live in the villages who were deficient either in intelligence or in craftsmanship. Whereas, formerly, the talent of the village used to be devoted to the improvement of its economic and social life, it now began to completely migrate from the villages in order to settle down in the cities. Thus, as a result of this educational system, our villages became the abodes of darkness and illiteracy. The universities, whose duty it was to spread light and learning

and enrich life all around, ended with producing the kind of people who sucked away all life and joy from the countryside.

Whatever may have been the economic and political importance of this educational system during the British period, it does not and should not exist any more. Our greatest problem today is how to fill up the cultural and economic gap which exists between us and the other countries the of the world. If we neglect this problem too long, not only our independence but even our existence will be in jeopardy. In order to make up for this leeway, it is essential that each one of us singly, and our whole nation unitedly and perseveringly, should dedicate ourselves to the achievement of this objective. But, this will be possible only when the chasms and gulfs which exist at the present moment between the inner structure of our individual personality and communal life will have been completely filled up.

The first step which we must immediately take is to establish complete harmony among the historic traditions of our country. It is quite evident to me that this can be brought about only by the mingling and merging of the European and the Arab currents with the main traditional current of our land. I say so, not because I believe that the indigenous tradition is superior to that of Arabia or Europe from the cultural or moral point of view. I think there is no question of better on worse before us in so far as this matter is concerned. The only reason why I advocate this course is that the indigenous tradition is the basis of the cultural life of our people. No one can deny that the life of at least ninety per cent of our people rests on its foundations. Therefore, even if the European or Arabian traditions or currents be taken to be better than the indigenous one, it would be quite futile on our part to seek by force to divert the course of the indigenous current in order that it may mingle with the currents that entered our country at a later stage of our history. The mingling of the former two with the indigenous current would imply only that they would contribute their special features to the indigenous current in order that there may penetrate or percolate into the life of every Indian. I would very much like the poems of Ghalib and the dramas of Shakespeare to become the property of as large a number of Indians as possible, instead of remaining the property, as they are today, of a few only.

At the same time, I would like that those who, at present, look with contempt upon the indigenous culture should at least make an effort to see whether its artistic and literaty creations have any value and beauty of their own or not. I think that it should be the duty of every one living in this country not to have any contempt or indifference for the great artistic and literary creations of these several cultural currents of our country. On the contrary, they should, with all eagerness, drink deep from them. When refer to the dramas of Shakespeare and to the poems of Ghalib, I do not in the least imply that every Indian should be compelled to read them in the English language or in Hindi overladen with Persian. Of course, those who would like to read them in such languages may do so with pleasure. But, I do imply that those, who are not acquainted with these languages, should have access to these artistic works in their own languages and it should be the duty of the universities to see that the artistic creations of European and Arabic culture are made available to their students. This also implies that the text books taught in the universities or in other educational institutions should have lessons which give their readers an idea and understanding of these historic traditions and their artistic creations. If we succeed in inducing all our brethren to march together in this matter, we shall very soon succeed in realising the objective of establishing an internal and social harmony. It is my conviction that the wall separating our masses and our intelligentsia can be demolished and the gulf existing between them bridged. In this connection, I would like to say that the greatest contribution which Gandhiji made to our life was to restore, by means of the *Charkha* and *Khadi*, by third-class trevel and by the Indian way of dressing and living, the sundered bonds between our intelligentsia and our people. By restoring their lost unity, he gave to our people a power, an enthusiasm and a vigour which they had not had for centuries. We have to be careful that this restored unity may not be lost again through our folly. There are, at the present moment, some educated people who think that the Indianisation which Gandhiji had brought about was quite alright for carrying on the battle of freedom against the English, but that under the changed conditions of today, it is not only quite unnecessary but is also even retrogressive and reactionary in character. I think that these people have failed to

see that nothing could do greater injury to our society than the sundering of the bonds that bind the heart of our people to the intelligentsia. I realise full well that we have to spread knowledge, literature and art as widely as possible, but I am not prepared to admit that the easiest way to do so to cut off the bounds that bind us to the masses. I think that scientific studies can be pursued with the same success while dressed in Indian style as they can be in any other dress. I cannot see how the delight of literature can be lost if it is studied through an Indian language. I would, therefore, urge as emphatically as I can that our Universities should no longer remain indiffernt to the Indian traditions and that they should make Indian literature a compulsory subject of study for their students. At the same time, they should make all possible efforts that an Indian languages should become the medium of education at as early a time as possible. It is only when we are able to do so that the split personality which exists today in our individuals and our groups would be completely eliminated.

Secondly, I feel that the time has now come when universities, instead of being the blotting papei of village talent, should be the institutions which would enrich village talent by their own contributions. This would happen only when the style of living in the cities is not entirely different from that of the villages. I do not, in the least, imply that we should import the evils of village life into the cities, but I do feel that there is no overriding necessity for that ostentatious and fashionable way of living which is found in the lives of the students of our Universities today. The life in the Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi was almost like that of the villages though completely free from all its evils. I think that we have to make an effort to introduce, to some extent, that type of life in our Universities also. If we are able to do so, I am sure, the students would not have any mental or cultural reservation in going to the villages to live there and to make the villages progressive units of culture. Moreover, if such a change takes place in the viewpoint of universities, the cultural wall that now divides the cities into two halves and the gulf that exists between the city and the village will be completely eliminated. It would also stop the migration of talent from the villages to the cities and would eliminate the split character that is found today in the personalities of our educated people.

It is the duty of those who are in charge of Indian Universities, to bring about this revolutionary change in their character. If they admit that the universities exist for the service of the Indian people, if they believe that it is through these educational institutions that the torch of knowledge and the devotion to ideals can be carried into the life of the common people and if they consider it their duty to train soldiers who are to bring about a revolutionary change in the life of the common people of India, they must take effective steps in the direction of bringing about such a change in the university system. At the same time, I would urge on you, the Graduates, that in order to discharge the obligation that your countrymen have placed on you by providing you with education, it is your duty to dedicate yourselves to their service. You have to carry light into millions of homes and cottages. You have torch which shines all the brighter by kindling other torches. You have the wealth which increases the more it is given away. You can fill with new life, every child of this country by giving wealth and spreading light. March on with strong determination and firm steps and by discharging these duties, fulfil the expectations that history and your country have of you. It is my heart's desire and prayer that God may give you the strength and wisdom to come out successful in this great test of life.

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It is with great pleasure that I rise to welcome here in our midst His Excellency Marshal Tito, President of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. We welcome him as the Chief of a State in Europe which has played an important and significant part during the last war and in subsequent years. We welcome him also as a great leader of men whose heroic exploits during the war for the liberation of their country evoked widespread admiration.

Even though this is your first visit to India, your name is a familiar one in this country which has admired the courage and determination which the people of Yugoslavia have shown under your leadership. We in India have faced different circumstances and have followed a different path. But many here have undergone like you the experience of long years of imprisonment and suffering in the cause of freedom. Both our countries have reached this goal of freedom through trial and tribulation and are now intent on preserving it and in adding to its content.

In our long past the contacts between our two countries, distant from each other, have not been great. But in the recent past and in the present, those contacts have grown because there has been much in common in our aims and ideals. We are both intent on building up our countries so as to promote the progress

*Speech on the occasion of the Banquet to President Tito, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, 18 December, 1954.

and happiness of our peoples. This process of building up and constructive endeavour, for us as for the rest of the world, requires the maintenance of peace. We are, therefore, wholly devoted to the cause of peace and co-operation among nations and we have striven to the utmost and our ability to reduce tensions among nations and encourage understanding and friendship among them. That has been your aim too and, therefore, there is this commonness in our outlook and endeavour in this great work for peace.

Every country has its own individuality, even though it may have much in common with other countries. Every country has been conditioned by its history and by its environment. Thus, there are differences between countries, but these differences in outlook or in political or social system need not and should not come in the way of co-operation. The only alternative to this co-operation between nations is conflict, and conflict today means something terrible to contemplate. Therefore, wise men have ruled out the idea of war in the circumstances that exist today. If war is to be ruled out, then the causes that lead to war should also be removed and what has been called the cold war should also not be encouraged. We know that fear, suspicion, and passionate resentment fill people's minds in many countries. It is not easy to deal with them. Nevertheless, if this world is to survive, we have to work continuously for peace and understanding among nations and for the removal of these fears and suspicions. In this great task we know that you, Sir, and your nation are vitally interested, even as we are. Indeed every sensitive and thinking human being, to whatever country he may belong, must necessarily be interested in this urgent task that faces humanity.

We look forward to increasing co-operation between our countries and your visit to India will undoubtedly help in strengthening the friennship between the two countries to their mutual advantage and for the promotion of peace and understanding among nations.

I trust that you and your distinguished colleagues will have a pleasant stay in our country and will see not only some monuments of our ancient past but also something of what we are doing today. These efforts of today absorb our attention because we are determined to build up this country and bring happiness and prosperity and equality of opportunity to all people who dwell here.

I welcome you, Sir, again and your colleagues on behalf of the people and the Government of India and I should like you to convey on your return to Yugoslavia our greetings and friendly sentiments to your people and our hope that we shall live as friends and co-operate in the great tasks ahead.

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INTERNATIONAL LAW*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

Let me thank you for the unique honour you have done me in asking me to inaugurate this Conference which, I understand, is the first of its kind to be held in India. It is only in the fitness of things that the Conference should have been organised under the auspices of the Indian Branch of the International Law Association—an Association founded in 1872 and justly renowned for its great contributions in the field of International Law. I am aware of my limitations and I am, therefore, approaching my task with a degree of trepidation. In spite of what the Chief Justice of India has been good enough to say about my being a lawyer, if I were to lay claim to such a status myself, I apprehend that Judges could be easily persuaded to hold that any such claim was barred on account of non-use for a prolonged period of more than 30 years, if not by the statute of limitation or the common law, at least by the law of common sense.

Those who have gathered here are persons of great experience. They are acquainted with different aspects of the problems coming up for consideration here, some because they have had practical and administrative experience of them, others because of their abiding interest in the advancement and reform of the law, others again, because they have made a profound study of the

*Inaugural address at the International Legal Conference, New Delhi, 28 December, 1953.

particular branches of the law. All the enthusiasts, and it ought to be one of the aims of a Conference of this kind to cause that enthusiasm to be communicated to others.

A glance at the imposing array of subjects on the agenda of your Conference is sufficient to show that without a deep study and vast research into the fascinating realms of International Law, it is not possible to say anything useful about the subjects which you will discuss in this Conference. I confess with humility that I have not hitherto been able to devote that much of time or thought to the important subjects under consideration here that I could say anything which is new to this distinguished assembly of lawyers from so many countries to whom it is our good fortune to extend our warm welcome today.

I may, however, be permitted to say a few words on certain fundamental aspects of the questions which interest not only this Conference, but humanity at large at the present moment. We find in the world today different ideologies, different ideals and different methods of attaining them. States are getting divided into blocs, each with its own ideology and programme of work. In spite of the existence and activity of the United Nations Organisation, which has been established by the willing consent of the nations of the world, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human being; in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", tension among nations who are members of this organisation has not ceased. And, while attampts have been made, and are being constantly made, to settle disputes by mediation and conciliation, we are not in a position to say that we are free from fear or that we enjoy any of the other freedoms which the organisation is intended to secure for all. It is true that the General Assembly of the United Nations has made a universal declaration of Human Rights, but it is not yet possible to say with certainty that these fundamental rights are available to all, or are ensured in practical application to all.

One sometimes wonders how the nations of the world are going to keep one another in order, unless there is a super-State

which controls each State, big or small, just as an individual's life and activity are controlled by the State of which he is a citizen. Even in the State which may be regarded as a well-governed democratic State, the relationship between the individual and the State is not always clear. In fact, one of the points of difference between the conflicting ideologies arises out of the concept of this relationship between the State and its individual citizens. Law, as it is understood, is the creation of the State. It governs the relationship between individual citizens of that State and between the State and its citizens. The underlying sanction behind such law is the might and authority of the States to have the law obeyed and enforced. In this concept of law, there is always desired at a *sine qua non* an external authority with the power and the means to enforce it. In other words, law is what is created by the State and has to be obeyed by everyone who enjoys the benefits derivable from its citizenship. There is, as a matter of theoretical essentiality, no necessity for the law to be anything more than the will of the State for the time being expressed through its appropriate organ; and it is in fact irrespective of any moral or ethical value. That many laws have such an ethical and moral foundation does not in any way detract from the soundness of the proposition that moral or ethical correctness is not an essential characteristic of law. So long as there is sanction to enforce it, as is the case in all well-organised States, the law may be enforced whether it is morally and ethically good or not. This does not imply that existing laws which are enforced by the State are without any moral value. As a matter of fact, most people obey the law not because of the coercive apparatus of the State but because they have developed a sense which has made such obedience a habit, if not a second nature with them. Even more than that, laws are obeyed because they are morally good and valid. But I am concerned here with the sanction of the State which may be used even when the law has not that moral quality.

When you come to consider international relations, where there is no such external saction available which can enforce what may be called international law against the citizens of a State, you will see that there can be no law in the strict sense of the term to regulate such relations. As Jeremy Bentham put it, International Law may be indebted to all or any of the "forces by which the

human will is influenced". Thus, it is in the sphere of international relations that moral and ethical values furnish to some extent the sanction for law, at any rate, so far as States which have regard for such moral and ethical values are concerned. It may, therefore, be said that laws on the international plane have a higher moral and ethical value than on a national plane, and as such they have an importance all their own.

How to invest law with the ethical and moral efficiency which will give it its own binding force, is the question which can very well be considered by those who are not burdened with the responsibilities of the governance of a State and who are in themselves capable of assessing the true value of laws. An association which in itself is a non-official organisation has, therefore, a utility and grandeur of its own, which cannot be equalled by any official organisation. You have the unique privilege and responsibility of guiding the nations individually, and also the International Organisation of the United Nations, by free, frank and fearless discussion of the principles which should govern the relationship between one State and another, on the one hand, and the individual and the State, on the other. There are no limits to your jurisdiction. I envy the ampler atmosphere in which you function.

I note with pleasure that the activities of this Conference are not confined exclusively to matters connected with International Law. I see that the agenda includes one item of special interest to me, namely, "Some features of the Indian Constitution", and another of considerable importance to municipal law generally, namely, "Organisation of Courts and the Legal Profession".

How I wish that you had taken for discussion two other subjects of no less importance, namely, the organisation and the functioning of legislatures. These last two subjects are of special significance in the present context because of the wide-spreading activities of the modern Welfare State. And, though the two subjects are closely related to each other, the functions performed by a judge and a legislator are mutually exclusive. For there is only one condition on which a man can do justice to two litigants, namely, that he shall have no interest in common with, either of them; in the case of a legislator, however, it is only by having every interest in common with both of them that he can govern them well. The indispensable preliminary to democracy is the

representation of every interest; the indispensable preliminary to justice is the elimination of every interest.

The law-making body is an entrancing subject of study and I hope you will permit me to dilate upon it a little. It is generally supposed that people understand their own interests better than others and, therefore, persons elected by them will represent their interests and will make laws and run the administration so as to serve them best. In the modern age, indeed in any age, it cannot be denied that there are conflicts of interest between individuals. But it is the duty of the legislators to resolve them and to see that the ultimate good of the people is served so that all may feel happy and contented. A real difficulty arises in regard to the concept of happiness itself, some treating it as no more than the satisfaction of material needs, present or future, others looking beyond the material requirements to something which they consider to be higher and nobler in life.

It is generally regarded, and I think rightly, that the rule of law should prevail in all societies which claim to be civilised. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that the law should be such as to command obedience not because of the State's coercive force behind it but also because it has moral value. That which proceeds from the voice of the people is not necessarily the better thing because the voice of the people is not always the voice of God. Something has, therefore, to be done to ensure the quality of the men who frame the laws so that the quality of the laws themselves may be assured. What is true in the case of a State and its law is true also, perhaps to a greater degree, of the law of nations which has no sanction except that of the intrinsic value which the law has. International law has, however, this advantage over the law of any State, namely, that it has been evolved by jurists and adopted by States. It is not a body of legislative enactments which have been enforced, and are enforced, by the sanction of the State. It is accepted by nations on its own merits and, as such, has a great deal of moral authority behind it. Some of the interpretations and proposals of the International Law Association have been adopted by the United Nations, and let me hope that, as time advances, more and more weight will be attached to proposals made by persons who have no personal or national interest in view but evolve their principles on their own intrinsic merits.

This is all the more urgently needed in the present state of human society when the clash of national interest drives States to war. The shape which war is now taking is more and more one of total annihilation of the adversary and nearly total annihilation also of the victor. It has, therefore, become necessary to adopt measures which may prevent conflicts which lead to war.

Conflicts arise, in their ultimate analysis, out of material causes and ideological differences. If they have to be eliminated, we have to probe into certain fundamentals. The emphasis at the present time is on material prosperity. There is no limit to the height which what is called the "standard of living" can reach, and in the very nature of things the conflict between the haves and have-nots is being intensified on account of the emphasis that is universally laid on the fulfilment of the material needs on which the standard of living depends. So long as man continues to seek happiness more and more in the fulfilment of his desires, and not in the satisfaction born out of contentment with what he has, the conflict is bound to continue. It means that the entire structure of modern society, if not of modern thought, has to be reconstructed. It does not mean ignoring the satisfaction of material needs. It means only the placing of greater emphasis on what is now wholly neglected, namely, satisfaction born out of contentment, which is entirely independent of the satisfaction of material needs. These material needs are so insistent and so self-evident that they do not call for any psychological emphasis, whereas contentment is very largely the result of mental discipline and needs psychological emphasis so that it may be able to hold its own in its encounter with man's physical needs.

It is evident that when no limit is put to the physical needs of man, the conflict can never be resolved. To take a very crude but effective illustration; there was a time when man was satisfied with the speed which his legs could give him. In couse of time he felt that he should have greater speed, and today we have reached a stage when, if reports are correct, he can travel at two and a half times the speed at which sound travels, that is, 1,600 miles an hour. I do not know if the ultimate limit has been reached even yet. This craze for speed is only symbolic of man's desire to surmount and surpass the limitations put on his physical capacity; and it serves to indicate that in other respect also he cannot put any limit to what he considers necessary

for him.

The question now arises whether mankind as a whole is happier with all this enormous and at one time unimaginable extension of his power to fulfil those needs. One might be excused if one be inclined to think that in this age with all the power which physical science has placed in his hands, he is less free from fear. The most powerful nations of today are living in constant fear of their rivals; and tremendous activity is being put forth to allay this fear by surpassing and suppressing the rival in respect of all equipments which are considered essential, and this is being done not for self-preservation but for annihilating the opponent.

This fear, no less than this insatiable desire to have material requirements fulfilled, is responsible in another way for controlling human liberties in diverse ways. As an association of lawyers, you can see how State legislation is spreading its tentacles to regulate the activities of citizens. Under one system it seeks to regulate all activities of the individual on the assumption that the State knows best what is in the best interests of the nation as a whole and also of the individuals composing it; in other words, the annihilation of the individual's personality is in his own best interests and the best interest of the nation, which is only a combination of individuals. Even in those countries where this ideology is not accepted or recognised and where great value is said to be attached to the personality of man, it cannot be denied that man-made law is trying to cover large and still larger spheres of man's activity. This arises because, taking all in all, the emphasis in those countries too is more on the satisfaction of material needs than on contentment; and that is so even when they profess and believe that the personality of man has to be respected and given full opportunity to develop. They inevitably are driven to the position of controlling the individual's activities because they are essentially motivated by a desire for fulfilment of physical needs. This also explains the emphasis on the representation of the interests of individuals and groups by their chosen representatives in the legislature, which is given the right to frame laws. When there is no limit, theoretically speaking at any rate, to these needs, it is only a matter of expediency and not of principle that a law which may be framed has any value apart from its capacity to help in the fulfilment of those needs. The same principle explains, and

in fact necessitates, the emphasis on rights than on duties. Rights always imply what one has to take from or enforce against others. Duties, on the other hand, express what one owes or has to give to others. We may not expect any fundamental change unless the whole outlook is changed; and a beginning towards that change can be made by shifting the emphasis from one form of satisfaction to another, as I have suggested before.

The value of qualifications which a legislator should possess becomes all the more obvious in the present context. There was a time when law was supposed to be not made by man at all, but to have been given to mankind either by God himself or by prophets and seers or Rishis. Secular law was not very different, or at any rate, fundamentally different from what may be called religious or moral law. All ancient laws will perhaps be found to agree in this, that they made man's happiness dependent more upon himself than upon anything outside himself, more on his own mental and spiritual satisfaction than on the satisfaction of his physical needs and requirements. Once we are able to begin to look more in the direction of this inner satisfaction than to the fulfilment of physical cravings, the way will be opened for a solution of conflicts. Ideological differences too are based on differences of outlook on this basic question of internal fulfilment and satisfaction by external devices. Therein we see the emergence of non-voilence which aims at fulfilment without external coercion in any form.

It has been well said that wars are born in the minds of men and so should peace be born there. The objective of the UNESCO has been very beautifully laid down thus : "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". That can be achieved only if there is a change in the make-up of the mind of man. An Indian philosopher, Dr. Bhagwan Das, who is happily still with us, has described the qualifications of the law-giver in the following words. I believe he is guided in his description by what were treated in the days of old as the essential qualifications of one who laid down laws : "Persons elected to it (legislature) should be of mature experience, wide knowledge, disinterested philanthropy, widely honoured and trusted by the people because of their lives of proven worth. Arithmetical devices like those of proportional

representation, single transferable vote, reserved seats for special interests and votes secured by or for candidates of unknown ethical quality by means of whirlwind campaigns of electioneering tricks cannot and do not cure ethico-psychical diseases of egoistic selfishness and defective character; and the presence of serious ethical defects in legislators is fatal to the wisdom and beneficence of the laws enacted. The legislator must be above all prejudices of race, creed, caste, colour and sex. In other words, only good and wise legislators can make good and wise laws; therefore, only such persons as have been proven good and wise by their lives, should be elected to the legislature."

If such legislators are to be found, it is very necessary that these very qualities aie present amongst their electors as well. As a first step in this direction, coercion in any form by one individual on another or by one group or nation on another group or nation has to be ruled out and non-violence made the basis of relationship. It was one of the characteristics of Indian saints and seers to sum up in a few words the fundamental truths of life. That is how our philosophy is contained in simple *sutras* or aphorisms. It was left to some other to reason out in logical form the philosophy underlying these aphorisms. Others, again, wove them into simple fables and stories which would be intelligible and acceptable to simple, unlearned and unsophisticated people. It was in the line of succession of these seers of India that Mahatma Gandhi summed up his philosophy in two words "Satya and Ahimsa" (Truth and Non-violence).

You, members of the International Law Association, are, I believe, not hampered by any limitation of being either an official body or representatives of any particular group of individuals or nations; and you can, if you so choose, being to bear upon your deliberations complete freedom of thought and expression. You can lay emphasis on ethical values for which I have pleaded and thus help in reorientating the outlook of humanity and saving it from the impending ruination to which it is being led.

In according you a cordial welcome, wisning you deliberations every success and urging on you the adoption of breadth of vision and freedom from all narrow notions, I can only hope that I have not been led to say anything which is inappropriate for an occasion like this, and I ask to be excused if I have allowed myself to be betrayed into any impropriety.

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IMPORTANCE OF THE JUDICIARY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this afternoon's function of laying the foundation-stone of the building which will house the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court came into existence under our Constitution on January 26, 1950. But like many other institutions it had its predecessor in existence, the Federal Court of India, which was established in 1937. Ever since their establishment, the Federal Court and latterly the Supreme Court, have both been holding their sittings within the premises of Parliament House. As is well known, Parliament House was designed originally for the purpose, and it still serves the purpose, of housing the Supreme Legislature of the country. It was only on account of the exigencies of time that accommodation had to be provided for the highest tribunal in the land within those premises. The inconvenience and the insufficiency of such accommodation have long been felt, and it also found expression from time to time. It is a matter of gratification that we can now look forward to a date when the Supreme Court will have a habitat of its own where it can transact its business with comfort and dignity and also enable all those who have business with the Court to perform their functions with equal ease. I am hoping that the structure which is going to arise on the foundation which is being laid today will be worthy of the great institution it is

*Speech made at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the new building of the Supreme Court of India, New Delhi, 29 October, 1954.

going to accommodate. I trust there is ample provision for additions and alterations later, as need arises. Unless there is such provision, I am afraid it will be difficult to keep pace with time and we may find it more difficult to add to or alter the building than even to amend the Constitution !

As is well known, our Constitution is a federal constitution. It was prepared at a time when we had the advantage of similar and other constitutions, written and unwritten, of various countries of the world before us. An attempt was, therefore, naturally made to incorporate in it what was considered best and most suitable for our people. With the vast variety in many matter of vital importance that we that in the country at large, a Federation was an absolute necessity, which could not be avoided even if anyone desired to avoid it. We, therefore, necessarily have delimination and demarcation of jurisdiction between State and the Central Authority. Legislatures, both Central and State, are supreme in some respects, but have limited or no jurisdiction in certain other respect and naturally it sometimes becomes a matter of dispute as to whether a particular matter falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Central or State Legislature or within the concurrent jurisdiction of both. The Constitution lays down a set of fundamental rights which may not be ordinarily encroached upon by the Legislature, whether Central or State. There are some other non-justiciable rights which though not enforceable in the court are still considered as fundamental to the policies of the State. We have also a large volume of litigation as between one individual citizen and another or between a citizen and State. All these are matters in which, in some form or the other, resort to courts is had for interpretation of the law or for safeguarding the rights of citizens. The Supreme Court being at the apex of a system of courts of a various grades spread all over the country, has naturally to serve not only the entire population and all the State and the Republic, but also has a very wide jurisdiction in respect of all justiciable matters which may be brought before it. In matter constitutional, it has of course the original jurisdiction of deciding constitutional disputes. It has been made the guardian of the fundamental rights under the Constitution. It serves as a Court of a Appeal against decisions of High Courts and has other supervisory jurisdiction over all manner of judical matters.

Its responsibilities, therefore, are immense and the country naturally looks up to it to uphold the Constitution and the rights of individuals and States, and to do right by all manner of people without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. Its task has been made not less difficult by the fact that our laws, customs and usages have, during the last 150 years or so, drawn very largely upon the jurisprudence of western countries, particularly England. Our legislation during that period has been modelled very largely on English law and the interpretation put upon many of these Acts has been influenced not a little by considerations and principles which were essentially applicable to English conditions but were adopted in this country as being based on rules of natural justice and fair-play. Our Courts, particularly the High Courts and especially the Supreme Court, still function in an atmosphere of British precedents, although in many matters light has to be sought from other sources, as for example, from the United States judgments relating to matter which do not ordinarily arise in England on account of the supreme sovereignty of Parliament but which do arise in America and some of the Dominions on account of the federal nature of the constitutions. That the Courts in British India were able to establish a tradition of independence of the executive, of justice and fairplay, not only as between individuals and individuals but also between individuals and the State during the British period of administration, speaks volums for the high traditions of the British judicial system and those associated with the administration of law there. In framing our Constitution, we have deliberately attempted to give to our Courts complete independence so that not only may justice be done, but also that everyone may feel that justice has been done as those administering it are independent and honest people who have discharged their duty without fear or favour or affection or ill-will. That is the great safeguard our Constitution provides against disruptive elements. Let me hope that the Supreme Court will continue to function in an atmosphere of supreme independence and administer justice to all.

Within the few years of their existence the Supreme Court as also the High Courts have had to deal with constitutional questions of great importance, in which the validity of laws passed by legislature has been questioned, executive action of Governments challenged and protection of rights of individuals as against

the State sought. As must be expected, that part of the Constitution dealing with fundamental rights has come up for discussion on numerous occasions and the courts have not hesitated to give their decisions against the Government. There may have been occasions when some of such decisions have caused inconvenience or have even been instrumental in holding up matter considered as of supreme importance by the Government. But it must be said to the credit of all concerned that all such decisions have been accepted and given effect to. The Supreme Court has got no agency of its own to enforce its decisions which have to depend upon the State and Central Governments for execution. It is a matter of congratulation that all such decisions, even where they have gone against their own wishes and policies, have been given fullest effect to by all the parties concerned. That establishes the supremacy of the law and, I am sure, I am not exaggerating the effect of this when I say that we could not have hoped for a stronger or better proof of the stability of our Constitution.

While the fundamental rights have defined the rights of individuals on the one hand, they have also declared that all laws inconsistent with these fundamental rights are void. On the other hand a right to sue and be sued has been reserved in certain matters and one curious case has come to my notice to which it is worthwhile drawing attention. Under the English Rule of Common Law, the King can do no wrong and so a tortious act committed by a servant of the Crown in the discharge of his duties, gives no cause of action to the sufferer. This has been adopted and regarded as a part of the law in India for about 100 years or so, and although in England, where the doctrine originated, the Crown Proceedings Act, 1947, has abrogated it, it has been held in this country to be still applicable because of certain provisions in our Constitution relating to suits and proceedings whereby rights to sue or to be sued are preserved to or against the Union of India or the Government of any State. In this particular case a man driving in his own motor car suffered collision with a truck of the Defence Department of the Government of India. He was under some arrangement able to get compensation for damage to his car but when he claimed damages in a Court of Law for injury to his person, the suit was held to be barred by the rule that the State could not be sued for the trotious act of its employed, to truck driver, and it was dismissed on a preliminary objection and the

Court could not get an opportunity to pronounce on the merits of the case as to whether the driver was to blame or not. The question has not come up, as far as I know, before the Supreme Court, but it raises a fundamental issue as to whether even after the New Constitution has come into force, we are bound hand and foot by rules of foreign law whose applicability was not quite clear even before on account of their artificiality.

My own feeling is that in all such matters, while precedents may be of great value in deciding disputed points, courts cannot afford to ignore the demands of natural justice and have to go behind them, if so required.

Another matter which I think deserves consideration both from the executive and the judiciary is that each should be careful and cautious not to give any room for suspicion that it is in any way encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the other. The division of functions of the State does not, and ought not to mean any conflict between the various organs. They are all the organs of one entity, the State, and each has its own functions to perform which it should be free to perform and in the performance of which there should be no interference by any other. While, therefore, we may accept as a maxim of great validity the power of the courts to interpret the law so as to serve the purposes of the State, it should never be treated as a justification for creating new laws by courts under the guise of interpreting existing laws. On the other hand, there should be no attempt on the part of the executive or the legislature to usurp the function of the court. The legislature, representing as it does the sovereign will of the people, has to interpret that will in a suitable form by enacting legislation. In a progressive society, the popular view is also constantly changing and so what the legislature considers just and reasonable today may be considered unjust and unreasonable in the future. The laws have, therefore, to undergo changes and such changes can be brought about only by the legislature. But once the law has been so enacted, it should be the duty of the court to see to it that it is enforced and naturally it follows that it has to intrepret the law as it stands in order to enforce it. There is a tendency, however, which is not altogether invisible, to lay down provisions in Acts ousting the jurisdiction of counts to interpret the law and leaving it to the executive to determine the meaning of the law so enacted. While this may be necessary in certain circumstances, particularly

on account of the complexity of procedure resulting in law's delays, it should not ordinarily, and except in rare cases, be resorted to as a means of avoiding inconvenience to the executive arising out of their anxiety to see things proceed quickly and at the same time not being able to scrutinize the laws promoted by them with the care necessary for eliminating all such risks and inconveniences.

I have no doubt in my mind that the fundamentals of our Constitution are sound and the way in which the various organs have functioned gives hope of its stability. I have confidence not only in the ability and the integrity of the judges who adorn the High Courts and the Supreme Court, I have also confidence in the judgment of our people who, I am sure, will take a commonsense view of all problems facing them and enable their representatives to deal with them in the best way possible. There is, and there should be, no conflict and I am sure I am expressing the considered will and opinion of the country as a whole that the Supreme Court will continue to be the buttress which supports our freedom and the foundation of the structure which I have laid today is only symbolic of the foundation of justice and fairplay which are embosomed in the hearts of our people.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JUDICIARY*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I thank you for the honour conferred upon me by asking me to unveil the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi this morning. As you have pointed out, it has been the great good fortune of some of us to have been associated with Gandhiji in his great work and we are now reaping to some extent the benefits of this *Tapasya* which he underwent during the greater part of his life.

In this House of Justice, we all come with a sense of reverence because we know that in the presence of Judges, all are equal. You have rightly pointed out that we have a legal system based on the judiciary of England. If I may say so, we need some changes which undoubtedly will come in course of time. At the present moment, everything in this country is more or less in the melting pot. There are old things which are disappearing and which are bound to disappear. There are many new things to come, the shape of which we do not yet see. The judicial system also needs changes. There are certain things which are apparent to casual observers and which have to be changed at once. The field of litigation is going to be narrowed considerably on account of social and political changes which are taking place. In this State as also in the neighbouring States of Bihar and Bengal, the Permanent Settlement and the Zamindari system had contributed very largely to the volume of litigation and there were big and famous suits which went up even to the Privy Council. They also

*Speech delivered while unveiling the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi in the Orissa High Court at Cuttack, on November 18, 1951.

created a great deal of litigation as between the land-holder and the tenant. With the great changes which are going to be made, such lengthy and big cases would not be seen hereafter. Probably, there would not be much litigation between the Zamindars. Perhaps, we may not see as many suits between the land-holder and the tenant as in the past. At the same time, new avenues of litigation are being opened with the industrial and commercial development involving labour disputes, commercial cases and disputes relating to industrial concerns which are bound to arise. I think, more and more attention of the courts will have to be devoted to them. More than all this, we have before us our Constitution, in which Judges have to decide disputes not only between one citizen and another or between a citizen and a State, but also between a State and a State, the States and the Centre and between the Government and the Legislature. A great field is now opened up before the courts. A big crop of cases which are coming up almost daily in all the High Courts are for the interpretation of certain Articles of the Constitution. I hope the High Courts, the Supreme Court and other courts will rise equal to the occasion and do justice to all such cases. It is a great privilege conferred on the courts and, if I may say so, with the great privilege has devolved on them a great responsibility of deciding cases not only with knowledge, integrity and intelligence, but also with a certain sense of responsibility. While on the one hand, they have to maintain the liberty of the individual, they cannot ignore the safety and security of the State and the authority of the society and the social system. The best thing for Legislatures and for those who have to carry on the administration is to adopt the middle course. But, for the courts there is no right, left or even the middle course. The courts can follow only one course and that is the course of justice, impartiality and honesty. In adopting that course, they have always to be careful so that in safeguarding the liberty of the individual they do not endanger the security of the State and in safeguarding the security of the State, they do not jeopardise the liberty of the citizen. This is a matter for the consideration of the Judges when such cases come up for decision.

I hope, the litigation relating to interpretation of the Constitution will, to some extent. dwindle down after some time. When the complicated articles of the Constitution have been subjected to judicial scrutiny, probably there will be less room left for litigation,

In the meantime, we have to build up a great tradition not only for the Bench but also for the Bar. The Bar's responsibility will grow more and more and it will become important because it will be the only recruiting ground for the Bench. You have to do your duty and also to see that the Bar rises in stature and fulfils the function which is expected of it without fear or favour. This is required not only from the Judges but also from the members of the Bar. If both go hand in hand, we shall have a strong and good judicial system. You cannot and should not forget what underlies litigation and try to do justice without fear or favour. When I think of Mahatma Gandhi and his views on the subject, I feel it was a certain kind of demoralisation and weakness in the Bar which he protested against. Of the Bar and its function, people often think that it is to place only one side of the case before the Judges. They are not aware that the Bar has a duty which is in no way less sublime than that of the Judges. The Bar should place the cases of their respective sides before the Bench, but they should not consider that their business is only to see that they win the case.

As you have said, the law of procedures in this country requires consideration. When I say a word about law, I speak with great hesitation, for, in the legal sense, I am a time-barred lawyer being out of touch with the law for many years. But, I can say that many rules of evidence require change. We have derived many rules of evidence from England. The English law of evidence is a highly artificial system and, in this country, attempts have been made be Legislatures to do away with some of that artificiality. I do not, however, know how far they have succeeded in this. There are certain rules which are really of no use to this country and therefore, not only the courts but also the Legislatures have to see to it that the laws are amended and brought in conformity with the real life. I think that can be done. In this work, we shall have to take the assistance of the lawyers, of Judges and jurists and above all, the assistance of the common man. We know that the truth about a case is not spoken out. Sometimes, the truth about a case is supported by untruth. I remember incidents when a witness speaking before a Panchayat said that he must speak the truth because he was speaking before a Panchayat and not before a court. That is certainly a matter for consideration. It is because of the artificiality in the procedure and certain rules that even

good cases have to be supported by false evidence. We should make it possible to win a good case with truth alone. That is what the courts have to do and what the judicial system has to achieve. I remember a case in the Patna High Court in which I said to a Judge, "My Lord, justice of the case requires, etc.". The Judge retorted, "Judges are not here to do justice but to decide cases according to the evidence on record". That was a rather startling thing. What Mahatma Gandhi would have liked us to evolve, is a Procedure which will eliminate this difficulty. We have to build up the character of men whether lawyers or Judges, litigants or witnesses.

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WORKING THE CONSTITUTION*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

I thank you sincerely for the honour you have done me by presenting me with this civic address. It is not my first visit either to Ernakulam or to this State, but, of course, it is the first visit by the President of India.

The first Constitution framed by free India came into force only fourteen months ago. During this short period, we have been trying our best to give effect to the various provisions of the Constitution. It has many unique features. It is based upon the experience gained by people in different parts of the world and I may tell you that we have drawn freely from the existing Constitutions of countries all over the world. We have, tried to adapt them to our own circumstances—its success, time alone will show. It is an achievement not so much because of its various provisions, but because the unanimous will of the people of this country embodied in it.

We have, in our country, many communities, castes, religions and many different customs and languages. But, India has always presented a unique spectacle of unity which underlies all this diversity. I am now here at the southern tip of this country. I come from almost the northernmost tip and I tell you sincerely that I do not find that I am different from you in spite of differences in language and customs and, to some extent, in respect of

* Reply to the civic address at Durbar Hall, Ernakulam, on March, 1951.

food. I hope many of you who have had opportunities of visiting Northern India, have experienced the same kind of unity in our culture. The Constitution has had to bring together all the different elements under one rule and, as I have said, the great achievement is that representatives from all parts of the country sat together and created this Constitution. There were states when differences seemes to be more or less insurmountable and impossible of being ironed out, but, ultimately, it all came out well and we succeeded in getting unanimous support even on the most controversial points. It may be easy enough to write out a beautiful Constitution which may be perfect in reading. Yet, if that Constitution is not worked out honestly, it may prove to be more a curse than a blessing. We already have the first part done. We have got a beautifully-written Constitution. It, now, rests with us to work it out in such a way that the objective which the framers had in their minds and which has been expressed in such beautiful language in the opening paragraph of the Constitution may be fulfilled.

You know, it is not only what used to be the old British provinces which have been brought under this Constitution, but it extends over the former princely States as well. That has been achieved, as I said the other day, by the people, but the patriotism, the far-sightedness and statesmanship of the princes deserves due credit. All have combined to bring about political unity. Let us hope that all will combine in the same way to work the Constitution and achieve the great objective which we have in view. That objective is nothing short of the happiness and prosperity of this land.

We have numberless problems facing us from day to day. Some of them are most difficult, but God willing we shall surmount them. I need not refer to the various difficulties relating to law and order. We have succeeded to a considerable extent in surmounting those difficulties. New difficulties have arisen and the most difficult problem is that of food. I do not wish to exaggerate it, but it is no use minimising its seriousness. We are trying to face the problem, but, as I have so often said, whatever the Government may do, it is really the people who have to face the situation and solve the problem. The Government, of course, has to do its duty and you may rest assured that it is doing everything in its power to provide relief. We are trying to import as much food as we possibly can. This year's programme is to

import larger quantities than ever before.

This country is vast and nature has given us a very feartile land and a climate in which almost everything in the world can be produced in this country. There is no fruit or grain which you cannot grow here; and with such a climate, with such an abundance of rainfall, with such fertile land, it is really a matter for consideration, why it is that we are not able to grow enough food for ourselves and why do we have to depend upon imports to feed our masses. There is something wrong somewhere and it is the duty of every responsible citizen to consider the cause and remedy it. My own feeling is and that is based upon the experience of village-people of whom I am one, that the village-people are capable of rising to the greatest heights if they are given the right lead. If today, we are not getting enough quantities of grain, there must be something radically wrong somewhere which is responsible for this shortage. It is for the Government, for the people, for all public workers to put their heads together and find out the cause. I believe we can grow enough food. After all, the shortage of food in the country as a whole is not very great. It has been calculated to be something like 10 per cent. Let us take it to be even 15 per cent. It should not be difficult to make up the deficit, I believe, with a little more care in cultivation, with use of more manure and with a little better husbandary. It is quite possible to add another maund to every ten maunds that you are now producing. And while we are doing this, let up not ignor that fact that the Government is considering big schemes which will bring large areas under cultivation and irrigate tracts which are not irrigated now. The problem of agriculture is really a problem of irrigation. I have seen, especially, in places like Rajputana which are now regarded as desert land that if you just dig a well deep enough to give water, you can produce crops. I hope that when these big river projects which are either in the process of being constructed or in the stage of investigation—are completed, there would be no scarcity of food in spite of our growing population.

We have, however, to feed the present population and for that purpose we need not wait for the big schemes to begin functioning. We can wipe out the deficit in production with the help of existing machinery and with a little more care and industry. I know that in these parts where you have been experiencing food

scarcity, you are trying to grow and use more of tapioca so shat it might, to some extent at least, reduce the dependence on rice. Let us hope that the experiments which are now being made, will succeed. Your success may also help the food situation in other parts of the country, I am not pessimistic about the futuie in spite of the difficulties before us today.

I would like to remind you that we are going to embark on a big experiment in the general elections that will take place under the Constitution. The Constitution will come into force ın its entirety only after the elections. Although I am the President and I have all the privileges and responsibilities of the President, still, I am only a sort of temporary stop-gap because 1 have not been elected in the way in which the fullfledged President will be elected. That will be done in November or December next. But you have to realise what a big thing you are going to do. The organisation of the elections itself is the biggest job that any Goveınment has so far had to tackle. We have to record the votes of about 17 to 18 crores of men and women. The very numbers of the polling booths and of the votes that will come to them are unsurpassed in any elections known in history uptill now. Let us hope that we shall discharge our duty well and vote correctly and honestly for the good of the country and the people. Let us pray to God that he will give us strength to choose our representatives correctly and let us hope that they will have the wisdom and strength to conduct the affairs of this country in the right way. If we fail, then the Constitution also fails, but I have no doubt about our success. God will certainly help us.

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THE PRESS IN NATIONAL LIFE*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

It is a great pleasure to be with you this morning. Let me begin with a word of greeting and congratulation. I congratulate your organisation on the success it has achieved during the short period of its existence. We know that, within recent times, we have had many difficulties and our Press has had its full share of them. However, since the advent of freedom many changes have come in and I am glad that you are now in a position to take advantage of the changed circumstances. In our approach to the electorate, which by its very magnitude is likely to frighten many of us, the position and the influence of the newspaper cannot be exaggerated. I am glad to see that you have realised that the position and influence of the Indian language newspapers will grow from day to day and that in two successive sessions you have elected Presidents who have been associated with them. I have no doubt that, in due course of time, the Indian language press will come to play a much more important role in the affairs of our country. It is up to you to ensure that it does its best for the good of the country.

In my view, newspapers have to perform two functions : they have to serve as purveyors of news and they have also to form public opinion. In the execution of both these functions you

*Inaugural speech at the 9th Annual Session of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, on December 2, 1950.

have an important role, especially in a country where democracy is in its infancy. I need hardly tell you that, so for as news is concerned, we want nothing more than a correct presentation of facts. It is, unfortunately, true that in some cases facts are imagined without any fault on the part of anybody. Perhaps, there is such a thing as bias or wishful thinking and it may very often happen that newspapermen, even experienced newspapermen, may sometimes be misled. Nobody can blame them if they are so misled, but what we do want and expect them to do is to strictly adhere to the truth in the presentation of facts.

With regard to views, the position is different. You are free to express and to hold whatever opinion you like and Constitution has given you the the freedom to express your views. I am glad that, on the whole, our newspapers have been performing this function with a great deal of success. On any particular question it is not to be expected that there will be agreement among newspapermen and the people or even among all the newspapermen themselves. Such a thing would be possible only in a totalitarian State, in a State where thought is regimented and expression strictly controlled. In a country which claims to be free, no one has the right to expect that opinions should be uniform. All that the public have a right to expect from you is to give expression to your views in a manner which will appeal to the reason rather than to the passions of your audience.

Your Conference has achieved great success in one sphere. It has served as a sort of liaison between the Government on the one side and the newspaper editors on the other. No one would wish that this liaison should in any way be regarded or treated as a kind of curb or check on your freedom of thought and freedom of expression and it cannot be denied that it has a value of its own. So long as understanding can be achieved by means of your organisation, it will serve a great purpose.

You have been able to effect a kind of liaison with our neighbour, Pakistan, through your organisation and I am glad that the effort that you made to bring about some understanding has succeeded to a considerable extent. There are difficulties and I am aware there are bound to be setbacks also. But, in spite of these difficulties and setbacks, if you stick to your viewpoint and express it honestly and fearlessly, keeping in mind the effect that

the expression of your views may have on the public at large and on the relations that ought to subsist between two neighbours, there will be nothing wrong and you will, I have no doubt, be able to influence the action of your opposite numbers on the other side of the border.

I have, therefore, great hopes from your organisation. The world is as has been pointed out, new passing through very critical times. As a young nation we have been trying to establish contacts with foreign countries. We have been trying also to lay down a line of action, a line of policy of our own which is independent of other. It should be the function of the newspapers in this country to explain our viewpoint to other countries in such a way that they may not misunderstand us. In critical times like these, a single wrong word may create a situation which nobody would like. You have to be very careful in interpreting our policy as well as in interpreting the policy of other countries to us, so that there may not be any misunderstanding. It is not for me to suggest that you should keep yourselves fully informed because I know you do that. What I wish you to do is not to be anxious, on the least provocation, to give expression or publicity to all that you know. There are a great many things which you may know, but which need not be made known to all and sundry. I believe that in restraint you will find greater strength and you will be able to do greater service to your country.

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THE FOOD PROBLEM*

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The problem of food is one in which every individual takes or at least should take interest, for, everybody stands in need of food. Our misfortune is that, even though India is a predominantly agricultural country, we are not able to produce sufficient food for our people and we are compelled to import it from other countries. The position this years is much worse because of the great havoc caused to the crops first by the floods and heavy rains and later by the failure of rains. As a result, even the next crop was considerably damaged. It is, therefore, the duty of every one of us to help the country tide over this food crisis. We should try to pull through with whatever locally grown and imported food we have.

The proposal was made to me for setting up an organisation of women which should point out to the people the desirability of adopting some changes in their diets so as to make the best use of the available food and advise housewives how to avoid wastage. I at once agreed that such an organisation would prove useful. I am very pleased that this organisation was set up and has made great progress in the last few months.

The exhibition that you have come to witness today, I

*Translation of speech delivered in Hindi at the opening of the Food Exhibition at the Town Hall, Delhi, on December 1, 1950.

understand, shows how the most nutritions non-cereal diet can be prepared at the lowest cost. I hope it will prove of great benefit and advantage to you. As Mrs. Munshi has remarked, if all the wastage that usually occurs in our homes is stopped and if people slightly change or modify their dietary habits and remain content with what they get, the food crisis can easily be tackled and overcome. I do not think the problem is insurmountable. It we really try and do all that we should, I think the whole problem can be easily solved. The deficit in our food production is estimated at about ten per cent of our requirements. As against our requirement of 100 maunds we are producing only 90 maunds. If our peasantry sets its heart to increase production, it will not, I think, be very difficult for it to wipe out the slight deficit. While one way of getting over the difficulty is to increase the production, the other way is to prevent the loss that occurs annually in our crops on account of pests and mice and in numerous other ways. Even if we could avoid the wastage of food in every home it would mean a great saving of foodstuffs. My feeling is that our present system of serving food is wasteful, particularly on the occasion of feasts and receptions. Usually, on such occasions, food that is enough for four people is served to one person and thus, wastage becomes inevitable.

In certain regions of our country, the people are rice-eating, while in others they are wheat-eating. If wheat is supplied to people habituated to rice and if rice is supplied to people habituated to wheat, they do not like it. But. I think that the time has now come when modification in this attitude is essential. We should now resolve to meet all our requirments from whatever is available. We can meet the deficit by producing other crops. It may be conceded that India has a deficit in cereals, but a man gets nourishment not only from cereals but also from fruits such as the banana and the papaya. They mature in an year's time and, therefore, the cultivation of such fruit plants can be of very great use to us. Tubers and roots can also be of great help. Our people are in the habit of taking these tubers and roots since very ancient times whenever they observe a fast. We may thus depend on potato, sweet potato and such other tubers as are produced in the South near the Tranvancore State. They are all very nutritious and we can easily cultivate a taste for them.

I believe that if our people took to such foodstuffs, we could pass through the crisis successfully. Even now, many poor people eat them as their staple diet. If we take to these—not under a sense of compulsion but with the conviction that they are very nutritious—the deficit in wheat and rice can be easily met. I think that every family should now acquaint itself with making the best use of such tubers and roots. I would like this organisation to carry on propaganda for this purpose. This exhibition has been planned with this very purpose in view. Evey one needs this knowledge because our country is poor, while the price of food materials are rising to an extent which we could not even imagine previously. When I was a student, we used to get 15 seers of rice for a rupee, but now rice is selling at the rate of Rs. 40 a maund. In those days, ghee used to sell at the rate of 2½ seers to a rupee, whereas, in Delhi now it sells at Rs. 7 or Rs. 7-8-0 a seer. The poor, particularly members of the middle-class families with fixed incomes, have to make both ends meet within their small income. They have, somehow, to secure the necessary food and other commodities to satisfy their basic needs. I am pleased to learn that quite a nutritions diet can be provided at the cost of annas eight only. This would be clear to you when you see this exhibition. The poor people would thus be able to meet their needs by the adoption of these cheap diets. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that this organisation, sponsored by Mrs. Munshi, has made much progress and I hope that it will continue to make its contribution to the solution of the food problem.

PART II

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PRESIDENT RAJENDRA PRASAD

K. ISWARA DUTT

Of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the honoured President of the Indian Republic who has happily woken up this morning at 71 amidst the nation's prayerful wishes for his long life and continuous. dedicated service, it may well be said that if he was Bihar's gift to Gandhiji, he was Gandhij's gift to India. Was it a mere coincidence, or was it an act of Providence, that their association began when Satyagraha in its pristine setting had its first manifestation on our soil in Champaran ? In a sense Gandhiji was all alone when unknowingly he ushered in a new era in our politics, out of revolt against the oppression of the tenants by indigo planters; he had, however, no need to feel lonely when he found by his side 'Rajendra Babu' who had felt drawn to him as if by instinct.

That was 38 years ago when Dr. Rajendra Prasad was only 33 but was marked out as the rising hope of the newly-created Bihar. After an academic career of exceptional brilliance he joined the bar in Patna and rose to a commanding position. Behind his professional eminence lay a continuous striving for public service since as a student in Calcutta he was deeply stirred by the national awakening in the wake of the anti-partition agitation and Swadeshi Movement. And by then he had also come under the magnetic influence of Gokhale and very nearly rallied round his banner as one of the 'Servants of India' It was a tremendous strain to him to have, for compelling domestic

reasons, withstood Gokhale's call to join the Society formally and asked for, or taken, more time to dedicate himself to the nation with a sense of completeness. When he, however, met Gandhiji in 1917 in his own home-state as a moral crusader, he saw things in a new light; indeed, he saw light. Life was not the same for him : it acquired a larger meaning and meant a grimmer purpose.

That this union of hearts of minds or spirit betwixt two such unusual men should have taken place where it did was a dispensation of Providence. For, what better region could there have been for so happy a consummation than Bihar, 'the *Maghad* and *Videha* of the ancients, the birth-place of Buddha . . . Bihar of Chandra Gupta and Asoka of the Mauryan dynasty, whose dominions extended beyond the seas and in whose court Megasthenes sat and Pliny wrote; Bihar of Pataliputra and Nalanda ?'

There had been hectic developments since. In 1919, in the year of the Punjab Tragedy, the agitation over the Rowlatt Act drew Dr. Rajendra Prasad into the whirl of events and he signed the pledge to break unrighteous laws. In 1920 when the Congress plumped for Non-co-operation (with the British) he gave up his lucrative legal practice. For all his earnings—such was the measure of his austerity—he had but a sum of Rupees 15 left in the bank ! But his faith in Gandhiji was unlimited though the Master offered him nothing but poverty, incarceration and suffering.

He stood the test, despite chronic asthma. His moral earnestness and spotless character high-lighted the Gandhian struggle so much so that Bengal's veteran leader C. R. Das, who became critical of Gandhiji, openly said that Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the only excuse for the continuation of Gandhism. He could have asked for no greater tribute : he earned it richly. The struggle continued unabated. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was undergoing one of his periodic terms in the jail in 1934 when Bihar was rocked by the biggest earthquake in India's history. It became a moral obligation on the part of even the bureaucracy to set the acknowledged leader of the Province free. He salvaged Bihar.

The nation paid its homage by offering him the Congress 'throne' in 1934 at the Bombay session. Since then it was to him that the Congress had turned whenever there was a crisis—after the fiasco at Tripuri and latter when Acharya Kripalani,

after presiding at the Meerut Congress, tendered his resignation. Inside the Congress none was more loved; outside it, none was more respected. His top-level association with it, with his emphasis on the Gandhian code, was a guarantee of its unfaltering standards.

In the nation's eye he was alongside of the Mahatma. On December 11, 1946, the Constituent Assembly which was to draft Free India's Constitution, was to choose its permanent President. The great office called for a rare combination of qualities—knowledge, patience, a sweet temper, a just mind and the capacity to command universal respect. The House had not the slightest difficulty in making its choice. Without a single dissentient voice it voted for Dr. Rajendra Prasad—and had since set its heart on his primacy in the affairs of the State. It was a proud day in his life when Dr. Rajendra Prasad about three years later signed India's great charter—the new Constitution,

"Had he not joined Gandhi", said the American journalist, John Gunther, of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, "he would have certainly reached the highest position possible to an Indian in British India; he would have been a Supreme Court Judge or a Provincial Governor. But history has it *that*, having joined Gandhiji and come nearest to him, he has risen to the highest position within Free India's gift."

A man of solid intellectual attainment and a great jurist, Dr. Rajendra Prasad has a wide range of interests. As India's Food Member in the first National Government he set a high example. He has an abiding interest in nation-building work. Among other things he has promoted the cause of Indian History and championed that of Hindi. On the wider arena he has led the world pacifists. His chief title to distinction is, however, on the moral plane. And it is a tribute as much to his political prescience as to his moral instinct that, as President of the Indian Republic, he decided to spend sometime every year in the Southern climate and reconcile regional factors, if not obliterate altogether regional distinctions.

Here is a man who, in all the heated controversies of party strife and fierce conflicts of political warfare, has not caused or recived a single bruise. There is nothing like bitterness in him and political acerbities have left him untouched. His gentleness and innate nobility, his simplicity and sweetness, his sincerity of

conviction and earnestness of purpose. and, above all, his selflessness, have given him a moral stature that the nation has learnt to adore.

No man has by his personal example raised the tone of our public life more. India knows no gentler man not a greater gentleman. Simplicity never looked so great as in his presence. His modesty and humility have acquired an epic quality.

There is nothing dazzling about Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Like Mr. Nehru, he is not of the legendary type that can move a Multitude, nor like Sardar Patel is he of the stern type that strikes awe in men's bosoms, but he is of the more enduring type that instinctively creates confidence and wins respect. He lacks the fire of original passion but has the steadier blaze of noble compassion. He is our Aristides the Just. Wearing the stainless escutcheon of Gandhism, President Rajendra Prasad is the symbol, alike of a new Republic and an old civilisation, that is India.

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DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

ELA SEN

In 1893, when Rajendra Prasad topped the list in the entrance examination of the Calcutta University, the *Hindustan Review* wrote: "The young Rajendra is a brilliant student, by all accounts. We wonder what the future has in store for him. We hope he will live to occupy a seat on the Bench of the High Court of his province, and receive the letter of appointment—as did Mr. Justice Chandravarkar at Lahore—when presiding over a session of the National Congress."

Though this very paper prophesied for him the presidential chair of the Indian National Congress, at that remote time it could hardly dream of the niche the brilliant young student was destined to fill. Neither did the presidency of the Congress in those days mean what it did when Rajendra Prasad eventually attained it, for he first became President in 1932, when the Congress had been declared an illegal body by the Government. As a matter of fact, himself was in goal, confined for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Congress Sessions to be held at Puri were abortive. How far removed in ideal from the prophetic utterance of the *Hindustan Review* !

From the early days of his student life Rajendra Prasad showed a wonderful organising capacity. Through counted one of the distinguished students of the Calcutta University, he was never a mere bookworm. He was keenly alive and responsive to his surroundings, imbibing the intellectual atmosphere of his

college activities. In debates and discussions he was ever in the forefront. The Beharee Club was started by him in Calcutta in 1902, for these were the pre-Partition days when Behar and Bengal were one as "the Lower Provinces," and, therefore, a great many Beharee students migrated to Calcutta for higher education. This was the precursor of the Behar Students' Conference, which, however, did not materialise till 1906, when the first sessions were held in Patna. Thus, the lead in student movements can be traced to Rajendra Prasad.

Later in life, when he was practising as a lawyer, it was his indefatigable energy that inspired the popular opposition to the Patna University Bill. This Bill, of a most reactionary character, was introduced into the Imperial Legislative Council by Sir Sankaran Nair in 1916. But the vigorous anti-propaganda of Rajendra Prasad and his colleagues had the effect of getting the Bill substantially modified. His worth for the University of Patna made his claim to the Vice-Chancellorship secure. He did active work in the cause of cheaper education for the masses and agitated for the recognition of Hindi and other provincial dialects as the medium of education. But when he threw in his lot with Mahatma Gandhi he resigned his fellowship. His departure was a serious loss to the infant university, and the absence of his driving power proved a great handicap in its progress, especially when he accepted the Vice-Chancellorship of the Behar Vidyapith—a university run on national lines with a national objective. Under his guidance this organisation flourished, until it was closed down and its building seized by the Government, as a repressive measure against Civil Disobedience.

His greatest triumph of organisation was for the relief of those rendered destitute by the Behar earthquake of 1934. He was released, after fifteen months of imprisonment, two days after the earth-quake had taken place. From the very moment of his release he worked hourly and nightly trying to organise relief to the stricken people. It is a tribute to him that he obtained the co-operation of all those around him, and his own capacity for work enrolled still more helpers. But the resonsibility of this gigantic task was his, the burden lay with him, and there was not a moment that he grudged spending over suffering humanity. Rajendra Prasad, unaided by any outside forces, but merely by the magic of his personality, was able to raise 28 lakhs of rupees

(over £ 200,000) for the earthquake sufferers' relief. Even the great Viceroy of India, with all the vast resources at his disposal, his might and influence, was barely able to double this amount. It was Rajendra Prasad's indefatigable devotion that made the realisation of this vast sum possible—for while the Viceroy had, as a single instance, the resources of the Indian princes at his command, Rajendra Prasad's contributors were those who really sympathised with him and felt for the distressed people for whom he was labouring. His *clientele* were the middle class and the poor, and there was no compulsion or the lure of higher houour; what ever help he obtained was gladly and voluntarily given. From this can be gauged the vastness of his influence throughout India—this man who was debarred from Quetta as an extraneous influence when, after the earthquake there, both he had Gandhiji offered their help. The authorities lost nothing thereby, but the people lost much.

As early in the day as 1906 Rajendra Prasad became involved in the struggle for national freedom. Having come into direct contact with the spirit of revolt in Bengal in connection with the Partition, he too was dragged into the turmoil. He became greatly interested in political work, for both he and the other Beharee students were bound to feel the repercussion of the agitation amongst their Bengali friends. With all his heart and soul he threw himself into it, and though as a consequence his hitherto untarnished scholastic record suffered, out of these activities emerged the embryo of the man he is today. His own loss was the country's gain.

In the expansion of his Servants of India Society, Mr. Gokhale's eyes fell upon the young Rajendra Prasad. He was invited to join the Society, and was himself most anxious to do so, but his elder brother's influence prevailed over him. This brother had been to him more than a father, for it was he who had undertaken his education and upbringing after their father's death. It is to this man that he owes much of his success in every sphere of life from his earliest youth. Hence, it was no wonder that at this brother's request he should abandon the idea of joining Mr. Gokhale. This repression of self-gratification shows up a salient feature in the character of the man; the keynote of his outstanding personality. From that time—and he was a very young man then—he showed a spirit of cheerful selflessness which

has been the inspiration of his many achievements. He had been brought up to live a life of rigid simplicity, and from this he has never deviated. His needs are very few; thus he thought nothing of abandoning a lucrative practice at the High Court to join the Non-Co-operation Movement. As a man who is frail in health, burdened with chronic asthma, he displayed a great disregard for personal comfort and safety. Time and again he deliberately courted imprisonment by adhering to his principles. Even in a country which holds persons of such high order as Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore, Rajendra Prasad's personality has been no less in its moral grandeur. His position in the front rank of the workers is no sinecure; he has deservedly carried the honours and responsibilities of leadership.

Rajendra Prasad's first association with Gandhi was in connection with what is known to history as the Champaran Affair. The situation was grave when Gandhiji visited Behar in April 1917, it comprised serious complaints by the *ryots* (cultivators), including the compulsory growing of indigo. The Behar Government looked upon Gandhi's enquiry into their grievances as an unprecedented interference. This was not to be tolerated, and he was arrested and prosecuted, through subsequently released. It was then that Rajendra Prasad offered him his voluntary services, and he remained his faithful lieutenant right through those days. Ever alive to the slightest measure of relief for the poor, Gandhiji's endeavour touched him to the core. Sheer gratitude towards this man to whom every Indian, be he what he may, was dear, who was even then the mainspring of the national life, wrung from Rajendra Prasad a respect and deference which he was never to lose. As in every case, it was Gandhi who was his inspiration towards the path of nationalism. An inherent desire to be of service, and the glowing example before him, was his greatest incitement to choose the hazardous way of a political life. Through the efforts of Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad a great wave of feeling was created amongst the people in connection with the Champaran Affair. Matters came to such a head that the Behar Government was compelled to take notice of the *ryots*' demands. An official committee was appointed, and Gandhi himself was placed on it. This resulted in the Champaran Agrarian Act of 1918, by which a large measure of relief was afforded to the tenants. His first experience of public work in

conjunction with Gandhi left a lasting impression upon Rajendra Prasad and paved the way for future relationships.

But it was the Amritsar episode of 1919, when General Dyer prepetrated his "mighty deed" at Jallianwallah Bagh, that he was finally shaken out of the constitutional out of work in which he had continued even after the Champaran Affair. Events were moving very fast in the country, and he found himself swept in their train. When the agitation against the Rowlatt Act of 1919 started, Rajendra Prasad vigorously organised a campaign against it in Behar and signed the pledge to break all "unrighteous" laws. He made a stirring speech in Patna declaring that he would join the Non-Co-Operation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi should the Congress be in favour of it. Before even the decision was made at the Nagpore Congress of December 1920 he had suspended his practice in anticipation.

At that time he was well established in the legal profession, having started work at the Calcutta High Court in 1911. Before the partition of Bengal he was known as a promising and rising junior in Calcutta, and when he migrated to Patna after the Partition he came into a large practice there. He was held in high esteem by judges and clients alike. Never was there a more sought after junior than Rajendra Prasad; he was loved by his seniors and trusted by his clients. Had he continued in this manner, maybe the prophecy of the *Hindustan Review* would have actually come true, and if the Congress had remained anchored to its old moorings. But the tide of events and circumstances had broken the links and it had drifted apart, carrying with it spirits of Rajendra Prasad's type. Thus, Congress, having attained a different status, was a signal for a change in his career too. His destiny was irrevocably bound up with the destiny of his country. He emerged as the one leader of the nationalist element in Behar. By virtue of his outstanding merit this leadership had been thrust upon him; he had not sought it. But when it did devolve upon him he carried the honour as befitted a man of his character—with true humility and courage. He become one of the greatest exponents of Non-Co-Operation and Civil Disobedience and advocated passive resistance. His enlistment in the ranks of the Congress was a momentous event, for his extensive powers have left no doubt that he is well entitled to the unrivalled position he occupies in his own province, and that he has well earned his

popularity with the rest of the people of India. His is a strict idea of discipline and obedience to the edicts of the Congress. It is not that he does not voice his doubts of the policy advocated or refrains from criticism, but always it has been with a purely constructive motive. He is held in high esteem by all those in command, and his position amongst them is one of the deepest respect. His steady services have wrung an ungrudging recognition of his merits.

Rajendra Prasad is a firm believer in non-co-operation as an effective measure in capturing power for the people of the country. Civil Disobedience, coupled with passive resistance, produces much greater results is his theory. He has suffered to the extreme, financially and physically, because of those beliefs. Goal life has left a great mark upon him, for he was never of robust health. It was most difficult for him to withstand the privations inflicted upon him when stronger bodies broke down under the strain. But he never suffered from "cold feet" or a loss of enthusiasm when he came out of goal, and he was always ready to throw himself into the fray anew. On the occasion, in 1929, he wrote : "Let our slogan, threfore, be : 'Back to non-co-operation', for *that* alone will bring India to her destined goal."

He recognised with Gandhi that, so long as India remained a source of lucrative exploitation for Britain, Britain would cling tenaciously to her position. Thus the surest way of unseating her and compelling her to transfer power to the people of the land was to try to stop her revenues and harm her trade. Rajendra Prasad co-operated with Gandhi to the fullest extent in the no-rent campaign and the boycott of British goods. Since India was in a tribble state of dependency, being without her own armies, since she was utterly crippled financially, the only retort left to her was non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Vigorously this was pushed forward, and in Bihar it was most effective under the leadership of Rajendra Prasad. So great is his belief in the effectiveness of this theory that, though at the last election he supported and helped Congress candidates, it was through a spirit of discipline. Within his own heart he is still convinced that the capture of power will never be through legislatures, and that non-co-operation is the only means of forcing the hand of the British Government.

For many years now he has been a member of the Working

Committee of the Congress—a select body representative of different schools of thought and carrying on the administrative work according to their creed. He was for some time the General Secretary of the Congress, and for the second time became its President in 1935.

It was then that he had his momentous conversation with Jinnah, which in the last two years has given rise to controversial issues. At that time Jinnah, as the President of the Muslim League, was endeavouring to bring it within the fold of the Congress. What other schemes he may have had in mind, or what power he thought to win thereby, is merely speculative. Nevertheless, he approached Rajendra Prasad at Delhi about certain terms of concession and the recognition of the rights of the Muslims. Rajendra Prasad, whose mind had never worked on communal lines, was anxious to end this interminable feud between the Hindus and Muslims. With this in view he sought to propitiate Jinnah, as the Muslim spokesman, and tried to arrange terms with him. In his own simplicity he could not gauge the complexities at work within Jinnah, nor his craving for power. Therefore, taking the latter's sincerity for granted, he formulated an agreement in consultation with him. It appeared satisfactory to both, but Jinnah was sceptical as to whether the Congress would accept it. Rajendra Prasad assured him that it would be passed by a majority, and as for the minority in opposition, they could be fought as in the recent election. To this Jinnah agreed, and except Malaviya and his lieutenants of the Hindu Maha-Sabha, the other Congress leaders were in agreement with the project. But by this time Jinnah no longer wanted to compromise; perhaps his whole scheme had been based on rejection by the Congress, for that would establish his own claims to nationalism and mark the Congress down has a sectarian body, enhancing his chances of mass leadership. Thus, in Malaviya's refusal he discovered on excuse for withdrawing, and the negotiations fell through.

But it did not end there. For some unaccountable reason Jinnah produced it in 1937 as an incentive for his communal propaganda. He asserted that the Congress under Rajendra Prasad had broken faith with him. His motive was not wholly obscure, for the Congress drive for "Muslim support through mass contact" was becoming doubly dangerous to his position, and the increase in the Muslim memberships of the Congress was assuming

alarming proportions. It was to try and turn the tide that he produced this long past "grievance" and became involved in unnecessary arguments. Rajendra Prasad preserved a calm front and repeated exactly what he had said before, and in this he received the absolute co-operation of Nehru, who was then President. He pointed out that the door for negotiations had never been slammed, it still stood open, and if any suitable arrangement could be made, he was most willing to accede. Jinnah flung back what he called "Mr. Rajendra Prasad's sporting offer," and refused to do anything but discuss how badly he and the Muslims had been treated by the Congress. He put the entire responsibility of the alienment between Hindus and Muslims upon Rajendra Prasad's failure to keep his word. The "sporting offer" consisted of a challenge to Mr. Jinnah's sincerity in wishing to end communal strife : "Although I may not speak with the authority of the President on behalf of the Congsess today, may I make a sporting offer to Mr. Jinnah ? I offer to get the formula accepted by the Congress even to-day, if he offers, as he did then, to get the signatures to it of all Muslim leaders, barring one to two, whom he named to me. Will he accept it ?"

The offer is typical of the man, brief and to the point. Even through all these controversial documents not one word can be traced that is incompatible with the natural courtesy of his nature. There is not even any impatience in his answers—they are slow, deliberate and free from malice.

As a man, Rajendra Prasad is of a cool temperament, and keeps calm and collected in the face of trouble and opposition. Though he is vigorous in his attacks and a worker in every sense of the word, his enthusiasm has a more lasting quality. He is not carried away by his personal feelings, every one of his actions is deliberate and well thought out. He never rushes into anything, neither is he ever rushed into anything, but once he finds himself there he constitutes himself a bulwark of the organisation. There is an unobtrusive and quiet efficiency about his actions which is characteristic of Rajendra Prasad. Spectacular action does not belong to him; he is of that group of steady and sure workers who are the heart and soul of any movement. He has been gifted with an unorthodox ideal, and thus is singularly free from narrowness and bigotry. Though born in fairly comfortable circumstances, his life has been characterised by a plainness which manifests itself in

brutal attack, and several weeks elapsed before he recovered and was able to resume his normal life.

A leading figure though he is in the political struggle that has captured the whole of India today, he is entirely free from party politics. There is a moral generosity about the man that lifts him above these things, and he is capable of appreciating the intrinsic qualities of his enemy. Because he belongs to the nationalist party, it does not bind him to the other person's point of view. He has always called for direct action, but that has not made him truculent/or intolerant. While steadily carrying out the programme of work he has been deputed to enlarge upon, he bears no grudge towards those who stand in his way. The courage of his own convictions endows him with a respect for those of others; he has to do *his* duty sincerely, he cannot blame those who would do theirs according to their own ethics. His mental horizon has not become overshadowed by the gloom of party spirits, neither has he lost his clarity of vision in over-emphasising his own particular creed. His sympathy embraces one and all, while his judgment remains sound and true. Though at times people have considered him to be unduly influenced by his party, that is due to his strict ideas of duty and discipline. Within the organisation he might ventilate his disagreement, but once a certain policy has been carried, the honour of the Congress must be upheld at all costs. There has never been suppression of his personality, neither has he ever compromised; he may not agree with some particular manner of working, but if the majority does, he does not consider himself infalliable. This is not weakness, it is great example of mind control, so as to be able to stand aside, if occasion rises, without a trace of ill-feeling. An outstanding instance of this occurred in the case of the outlawing of the Behar Kisan Sabha (peasant organisation). It was Rajendra Prasad who had helped it into existence; he had sponsored its cause. But when it came to disciplinary action, and the majority in the Behar Provincial Congress Committee were for acting on constitutional lines, Rajendra Prasad stood aside and allowed it to go through. Bitter disappointment and resentment raged all round that even Rajendra Prasad had let the *Kisans* (peasants) down. He uttered no protest, volunteered no explanation, for he *was* guilty by virtue of having been unable to stave off this issue. Such an action is in keeping with the character of this man; but this is not weakness—

it is only the really strong in mind who can, do it. Ever since the Congress accepted ministry, Rajendra Prasad, with Sardar Patel and Abul Kalam Azad, have been placed by the Congress High Command in charge of the administration. They are directly responsible to the Working Committee, while the ministers are dependent on them for the determination of their policies. It is the duty of these there to guide them, according to the policy laid down by the Working Committee.

In what lies the power and influence of this man ? It consists mainly in his simple personality, and because the people can understand him. There are many who understand the people, but the people are often unable to fathom the complexities of such minds and confidence is slow to develop. But in Rajendra Prasad they find a mind clear and transparent in its simplicity and they have not to grope amongst a maze of convergent ideas to arrive at the salient points. They know that it is their interests he has at heart, actuated by a deep sympathy for them. Of course, he is not infallible; his judgments may be right or wrong, but it is certain that his motives are absolutely honest and free from personalities. His other accomplishments of a dignified eloquence, an administrative ability, and a power to maintain discipline are amongst the reasons for his popularity, but it is his sense of duty towards the people and the purity of his motives that have been the root cause of its permanence.

He has a quiet charm and a sweet demeanour unwarped by the rigidity of his own political ideals. To all his countrymen, whether they be rich or poor, Government officials or Congress-men, he tries to do justice. He has the unusual capacity of being able to gauge the other person's point of view. An unique illustration of this is to be seen in the recent proposed cut in the salaries of Indian Government officials. Rajendra Prasad knew full well that circumstances had forced them into these places, they had become accustomed to a certain style of living, and, in view of their social position, they would be expected to maintain that standard; they would have to do it for the sake of their prestige, hence less salary would only further degrade them in the eyes of the public. They were after all also his countrymen. Thus, he asked the ministers why they proposed to victimise these people because they could lay hands on their fixed income, when they had no power to control the enormous practices of the

doctors and lawyers. Could this restriction be made universal, it was the correct ideal, but otherwise it would be one-sided and pointless. His sentiments are in direct contrast with those of C. Rajagopalachari, the Premier of Madras, and counted one of those foremost in the political struggle, who said that the English officers were like "hot-house plants" upon whom great care must be lavished, but the Indians were hardy, indigenous products who would flourish by virtue of their acclimatisation. In view of this, the latter could stand a reduction in salary, but not the former.

Another instance of his quiet independence is the proud retention of the title "Babu," which is the equivalent of "Mr." But under Britlsh preassure it was translated into something totally and applied to persons of a lower social strata. But, in reality, it may mean "Mr." when prefixed to a name, or "the gentleman" when used in common parlance; hence Rajendra Prasad took a great pride in being styled Babu Rajendra Prasad.

There is not a single person who has associated with him who has not come under the personal charm of Rajendra Prasad's gentle dignity; and whether allied or antagonistic to his principles he has won respect from every side. People of entirely different political outlook have thought it a pleasure and a privilege to be able to work with him, for he represents the highest type of public integrity.

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DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD : THE PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT

D.B. MATHUR

Rajendra Prasad's life was a spmphony of patriotism. To read his biography is to recall the chronicle of India's struggle for freedom. Being so near a man such as Gandhi was, and being so intimate with him, anyone else without Rajendra Prasad's mettle would have ended up as a truant in public life and probably sucked into the vortex of oblivion, partly by accident and partly by default. Though influenced by Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad stood out for individuality and never for a moment did he become a party to inflate the invincible-hero theory. One of the foremost of fighters for India's freedom in the Gandhian era and a Congressman to the core, one of the architects of the Indian Constitution and free India's first President, Rajendra Prasad will live to inspire generations. Statesmen will come to be lost in the maze; but he shall survive the whims and anachronisms, vagaries and paradoxes of history to be venerated as one of the greatest gentlemen-statesmen that ever lived. Rajendra Prasad read his history in the nation's eyes and laid his life at the alter of public service. Never a partisan. Never a self-seeker. Always, always an upright public servant. A man of the men, friend of all, enemy of none, none his enemy. That was Rajendra Prasad as the world knew him. A silent patriot, brilliant in his erudition and self-effacing toleration, humble and devoted, Rajendra Prasad, like Pericles, was a true leader of the

people as much as their genuine and trusted saviour. In his rugged and sobre exterior, he personified humanity. To know Rajendra Prasad was to know India.

I

On December 3, 1884 Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, was born the youngest child in a family of three daughters and two sons, in Zeradei village of Bihar. It was a renowned and enlightened family. Rajendra Prasad's childhood in Zeradei, where oranges were a novelty and luxury and grapes no less than mythical, was spent in rugged and rustic surroundings. He became one with the soil and its tiller, and for all his life this served as an indeliable impression. He saw for himself the trials and tribulations of rural India. In the formative years, Rajendra Prasad had also the good fortune to imbibe his mother's deeply religious outlook. A close parallel is that Gokhale and Gandhi, likewise, had mothers who justified that the matrix proved the mould, Rajendra Prasad also learnt, early in life, the essentials of communal amity and social harmony. In the mango groves of Zeradei the propitious beginnings of a Patriot Savant were thus discernible.

Beginning his schooling under the traditional Maulavi, Rajendra Prasad received further education at Chapra and Patna. He passed the Entrance examination standing first in the University of Calcutta which had within its territorial jurisdiction Bengal Bihar, Assam and Burma. It was indeed a phenomental achievement, specially as it came from a schoolboy in neglected rural area deprived of even the minimum facilities that an urban school usually provides. That was the first time that a boy from Bihar had topped the list in the University[1] Rajendra Prasad was awarded several scholarship for his signal achievement. Thus, honoured he joined the Calcutta Presidency College. He passed the F. A. examination in English, Persian, Logic, Mathematics and Science, once again topping in the University. Among his teachers were the eminent Prof. Percival, Dr. P. C. Ray and Dr. J. C. Bose, Offering History, English and Philosophy at the B. A. examination, he topped the list again. In a blaze of glory he passed the M. A., B. L. and LL. M. examinations, thus qualifying himself for thesis in Laws.

II

As a student Rajendra Prasad came face to face with conservatism, ritalism and reactionary forces.[2] It was in Calcutta that he first felt the impact of the rising cresendo of nationalism. He observed :

> "I was very much interested in my studies, but after I had reached the B. A. class a new feeling stirred me, which diverted my attention from examinations to other things."[3]

He participated in the activities of the Dawn Society.[4] His reaction was characteristic of the inherent patriot in him :

> "Association with the Society stirred my thoughts. Examinations no longer held my attention and my imagination was caught by public and social affairs. . . My inclinations towards public activity since early age were now crystallised. I had been a newspaper reader and whenever the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress were held, I used to follow the proceedings avidly. I had always attended public meetings addressed by men like Surendra Nath Banerji. But it was the Dawn Society and the association with Satish Chandra Mukherjee that gave the tendencies present in me an aim and a diiection. I began to think in terms of the future."[5]

The anti-Partition agitation in Bengal and the consequent movements for *swadeshi* and Swaraj all over the country kindled a new spirit in Rajendra Prasad.[6] He was one of the pioneers who blazed the trail in organising the student community by the establishment of the Behar Students' Conference in 1906. "Nowhere else in India had students' conference been till then stablished which could be looked to as a guide."[7] Rajendra Prasad later recalled :

> Through this Conference "the students got their first leasons in practical organisation and in the art of public speaking. All the public workers Bihar produced during these 15 years received inspiration from this Conference. The country as a whole had benefited from the organisation. It was the workers of this Conference from whom Mahatma Gandhi

received support when he first visited Bihar."[8]

III

At the momentous session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1906 Rajendra Prasad acted as a volunteer and saw from close the iminent statesmen of smouldering Extremist and Moderate groups. He observed that the "Congress was then a loose organisation. In Bihar only a few people were connected with it and these were mostly lawyers."[9]

About that time, Rajendra Prasad made secret preparation to go to England to take the I.C.S. examination. The plan, however, fizzled out because of family pressure. In 1911, he started practising as a lawyer in Calcutta. Here he met Gopal Krishna Gokhale who invited him to join the Servants of India Society founded at Poona. Rajendra Prasad was in a fix as the "call of the country and the call of the family pulled in different directions."[10] In the end he decided not to join Gokhale's Jesuitic order, once again acquiescing in to the entreaties of his family.[11] Meanwhile his fame as a conscientious and honest lawyer spread. He came in close contact with contemporaries like Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh, Kulwant Sahay, Sir. S.P. Sinha. Khan Bahadur Huda and others. Rajendra Prasad modestly observed :

> "I worked hard and single-handed in poor litigants' cases. Some of the judges came to know me and were pleased with my handling of the eases. Some lawyers are in the habit of calling on judges but I never did so, the only place where I met them being the courtroom."[12]

Rajendra Prasad was also drawn towards Hindi at that time with the founding of a Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Calcutta. Subsequently, be actively participated in the first session of the All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held at Banaras under the presidentship of Madan Mohan Malviya. In later life, Rajendra Prasad stood by the cause of Hindi. His '*Atmakatha*' is an exquisite literary piece in Hindi. His advocacy of Hindi as the only answer to the quest for a national language was not the standpoint of a bigot or a fanatic, but that of a missionary who had weighed the facets of the issue in all their ramifications.

The field of public service that Rjendra Prasad chose was exacting and consuming. In the flood havoc that inundated vast areas in Bihar and Bengal, he did excellent relief work. After the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916, he, for the first time, worked openly against the repressive policies of the Government. His association with the Congress also increased effectively. At the session of the Congress Gandhi made his maiden appearance fresh from in heroic struggle in South Africa. Rajendra Prasad had little inkling that the Satyagrahi from South Africa was destined to play such a vital role in his life. Gandhi's tour of Champaran in Bihar brought the two closer still. Rajendra Prasad's reminiscences, *'Champaran main Mahatma Gandhi'*, makes remmulating reading of the experiences the two shared in those hectic days. The indigo—planters' agitation was a significant event in Rajendra Prasad's in as much as it was in the life of struggling India. He also met C.F. Andrews and had come to India at that time. Thus, launched in the foray of nationalist struggle, Rajendra Prasad observed :

> "We saw in Champaran on a small scale Gandhi's Satyagraha which he later organised through the length and breadth of the country . . .he taught us a new lesson in public affairs . . .The Champaran struggle was a fine rehearsal in the technique of Satyagraha."[13]

Along with Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajandra Prasad took part in the Kaira Satyagraha in Gujarat the same year.

Contemporary events moved at a considerable pace. Rajendra Prasad observed :

> "We had, thus, on the one hand, the offer of reforms by the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme and, on the other, the Rowlatt Report proposing to arm the Government with extraordinary powers during peace time. The meaning of this dual and contradictory policy was not lost on the people."[14]

Meanwhile, Gandhi's impact on Rajendra Prasad grew effectively. In the words of the latter :

> "The first lesson I learnt at Gandiji's feet at Champaran had brought such a change in my attitude that even those whom

I had had to oppose in principle reposed faith in my words."[15]

IV

Non-co-operation and Khilafat movements found Rajendra Prasad in the forefront. He was persuaded to preside over the special session of the Congress held at Bhagalpur in 1920. He delivered his address in Hindi, which was a reparture and many were taken by surprise. The Congress had virtually accepted non-co-operation but "the problems confronting the conference were so momentous and complex as to cause misgivings even in the minds of experienced persons.[16] However, Rajendra Prasad "was convinced about the necessity for non-co-operation . . .On one side was experience and public service and on the other were enthusiam, discontent born of an unbearable situation in the country and keenness to plunge into the struggle."[17] The unanimity and faith with which Rajendra Prasad convinced the sceptical few spoke of his leadership, and the resolution on the principles of non-co-operation was endorsed. Later, along with Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad toured the country to educate the people.

Not many know the details of Rajendra Prasad's services in the field of national education. His association with the Senate and the Syndicate of the Patna University was characterised by his zealous endeavours to make education meaningful and effective. He succeeded in getting the University rules amended to enable Hindi to be the medium of instruction. In his bid to nationalise education in the state, and to model it along the healthy precedents set by the experiences of the Deccan Education Society at Pooua, Rajendra Prasad discontinued his association with the Patna University. The results of this sacrifice were the Bihar Vidyapeeth and the Sadaqat Ashram, institutions that attracted eminent teachers from all over the country. Students flocked to benefit by such an opportunity. By Gandhi's help and guidance the noble venture began with Rajendra Prasad as Principal and Mazharul Haq as Vice-Chancellor.

To enlighten public opinion, Rajendra Prasad associated himself with two prominent dailies of Bihar, *The Searchlight and The Desh.* Rajendra Prasad was always a staunch supporter of communal

amity. Even in the darkest of times when religious fanaticism swept the land, his faith did not sag. He declared like a prophet :

> "If we think that the Hindu-Muslim question can be solved by violence, it will only mean more violence and the ultimate destruction of both communities. Only a policy of live and let live, mutual goodwill and respect, and non-violent behaviour can solve the problem and usher in an era of Hindu-Muslim unity."[18]

V

In his assessment of political questions and in his basic policies *vis a vis* the struggle for freedom, Rajendra Prasad was never hasty or clumsy or hesitant. Whatever he decided was based on rational judgment, national self-respect and in keeping with the teachings of Gandhi. After the unfortuate Chauri Chaura incident. Rajendra Prasad doubted the necessity of withdrawing me non-co-operation mandate. But after he talked the problem over he agreed and Gandhi with stood firmly by the Bardoli decisions.[19]

At the Gaya Session of the Congress the Council Entry tensions were at too obvious. Rajendra Prasad went out of his way to get M.R. Jayakar and K. Natarajan elected as delegates from Bihar as they had earlier lost the fianance in their respective provinces. Why did he do that ? Rajenra Prasad explained :

> "I felt that men of their calibre should not be left out and that their views should be heard at the session."[20]

Rajendra Prasad's views *vis a vis* Council Entry should be noted in order to assess his political maturity and foreberance. He said :

> ". . .I considered Council Entry useless because the rights which the 1920 Constitution gave us were entirely inadequate. Entry into Councils would only create illusions and differenes while non-co-operation sought to draw the public towards popular institutions, diverting its attention from the British

Government and its institutions."[21]

The country faced yet another challenge at that time. Many among the educated class had stooped down to seeking the loaves and fishes of office. Rajendra Prasad openly decried such anti-national tendencies :

"For one who wants to serve the people, there is room in any walk of life. I have nothing but pity for the self-delusion of those who argue that some position in the Government is essential for rendering service to the people."[22]

In the thick of the nationalist movement, Rajendra Prasad's political realism was always respected and recognised. On the eve of the ill-fated Simon Commission the Madras Session of the Congress of 1927 saw the passage of a resolution in favour of complete independence, in preference to domion status, as the goal. To the surprise of many, Rajendra Prasad opposed the resolution. Why ?

"...because I thought that we should not adopt anything for the implementation of which we were not prepared. There was, at that time, hardly any preparation or enthusiasm in the country which could help us achieve the objective of complete independence."[23]

Rajendra Prasad was right again. Despite the resolution being voted by an enthusiastic majority, for all practical purposes it remained ineffective till two years later at the Lahore Session it was incorporated in the Congress constitution as the goal.[24] Rajendra Prasad also opposed the resolution on Hindu-Muslim unity as it "conceded the right of cow sacrifice to the Muslims provided it was done in private."[25] He spoke to Gandhi also about it and made no secret of his conviction that the resolution defeated its purpose. He believed that, irrespective of the propriety of the resolution, it was an ignoble exhibition of bad statesmanship. He believed that the resolution "would never be acceptable to the Hindus as such and that if Muslims exercised this right there would be large-scale riots in the country".[26] Later events vindicated Rajendra Prasad's stand.

VI

Not much is known either of Rajendra Prasad's services as a lawyer being requisitioned in 1928 for the Burma Case Appeal filed by the Maharaja of Dumraon in the Privy Council. During his stay abroad, in England and on the Continent, he kept to vegetarian diet and Indian dress. Wherever, he went people kept looking at him with undisguised curiosity. Luxmoore and Upjohn, two of the eminent jurists of the day, were highly impressed by the labour Rajendra Prasad put in the case. They treated him with unusual respect. On his way back home, Rajendra Prasad went over to Santagsburg, near Vienna, to participate in a No-War Conference, under the presidentship of Fenner Brockway. After the conference Rajendra Prasad and a few other delegates went to Gratz to do anti-war propaganda. A misguided group of anti-pacifists want only attacked the speakers and delegates. There was absolute pandmonium. Rajendra Prasad, and many others, were injured. A full account of the unfortunate incident appeared in Gandhi's *Young India*. Rajendra Prasad took time off and also met Romain Rolland in Switzerland and continued his journey *via* Geneva, Paris, Holland, Berlin, Leipzig, Munich. Venice, Rome and Marseilles. He also visited Edinburgh. When Rajendra Prasad became President of free India, he visited Japan, Indonesia, Malaya, Combodia, North and South Vietnam, Laos, Ceylon and the USSR. He spead India's message and the visits served more than their purpose of being mere State ceremonials. India could not have sent a better exponent and follower of her political-ethics and ideals. Rajendra Prasad's speeches* during these visits make enlightening and refreshing reading in as much as they are one of the most authentic versions of what India stands for.

India faced turbulent times after 1928. Satyagrah a and non-violence only begot renewed repression. Rajendra Prasad was sent to gaol many times and the rigours and stresses of the struggle worsened his already frail health. For the rest of his life, he was haunted by physical afflictions, a legacy of those days. Not caring for his physician's advice, he continued to take active part in the nationalist movement.

Soon after, the Congress Session was held at Bombay in 1933,

*A useful collection of the '*Speeches of President Rajendra Prasad* has been published by the Publication Division, Government of India, in 1955.

under Rajendra Prasad's presidentship. It was a momentous session in many ways. The political climate anticipated constitutional reforms and elections to the Central Assembly were in the offing. As President, Rajendra Prasad faced an exceedingly difficult job of reconciling the warring sections within the party in the absence of which the fruition of the ideals was impossible. There was yet another problem. Gandhi had declared his intention to retire from the Congress in the interest of the organisation and had suggested suitable amendments to the constitution to make it more representative. Few realised that Gandhi was motivated solely by his inherent wish to strengthen the Congress. He had also promised always to be available if required for advice and guidance. The Congress did face a dilemma. Rajendra Prasad had, however, been calm and cool. He observed :

> ". . . .but his withdrawl certainly meant one thing, that responsibility for taking decisions would henceforth be that of leaders other than Gandhiji. Ever since Gandhiji entered the political arena in India, other leaders had been completely eclipsed by his magnetic personality. . . . The Mahatma's only aim was that on his retirement others would be prompted to think for themselves and the impression that whatever was done at his bidding would be removed".[27]

None else could have understood the mind of Gandhi. And Rajendra Prasad was perhaps the only statesman who agreed with Gandhi that the latter should make his exit.

The session also faced the problems that the Communal Award brought in its wake. Rajendra Prasad, as usual, rose to the challenges. He took vital decisions and all abided by them. He worked hard to revitalise the Congress, if the Congress swept the polls at the Central Assembly elections, the credit goes largely to Rajendra Prasad's zealous devotion.[28]

At this time also, Rajendra Prasad undertook the difficult duty of negotiating with Madan Mohan Malviya and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in connection with the Communal Award. The Congress, to the consternation of the Muslim League and the Government, had done well at the polls. But even then Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad, among many in the Congress, desired some sort of an agreement with the affected communities to avoid

clashes in future. Rajendra Prasad failed to convince either Jinnah or Malviya, not because he lacked the celibre but because he could not bypass the principles to which he was wedded. Malviya stuck to his precipitous stand-point, and Jinnah, as usual, was adamant on trifles, careless of maxims, inconsistent, unpredictable, naughty, mercurial and what not.

VII

By the end of 1937, as the Congress succeeded at the polls and formed ministries in various provinces, Rajendra Prasad was entrusted with the task of strengthening them for the vital role of nation-building. In Bihar, especially the tenancy and agricultural reforms bore the impact of his foresight and kindly persuasion. The tiller and the zamindar, traditionally pitted against each other, were explosive elements to handle. Rajendra Prasad achieved success where even the most optimistic would not have relented in the end, and even today he is remembered as *the Great reconciler.* The year 1939 saw the world poised for disaster, for the second time in the century. The Congress also faced a near disaster at its Tripuri Session. Subhash Bose wanted to be re-elected as Congrers President but did not confide his intentions in the Working Committee, and to everybody's surprise went about canvassing for his candidature. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was the rival choice after Abul Kalam Azad withdrew. The crisis was thus precipated much to the chagrin of all the well-wishers of the organisation. There could be no going back either. Bose was elected. A rift was imminent now. The Working Committee did not agree with Bose and Bose did not have a majority behind him to enable him to function at all as the President. The events that led to the resignation of Bose were entirely unworthy of those who were apathetic to the essential unity of the Congress. Rajendra Prasad, once again, came to the rescue of the Congress. It was easy enough, and posssible, to bring in a stop gap President. The need of hour, however, was more exacting. The stop gap arrangement would have meant exposing the President to being relegated to the ignominy of a scapegoat. Rajendra Prasad averted another ugly imbreglio being enacted as had earlier stained the fair record of the Congress at Surat in 1907. Worthy of the accolade *Ajatshatru,* he took up the unpleasant duties at the behest of Gandhiji. Rajendra Prasad

was called upon to rescue the Congress, once again in 1947, when J.B. Kripalani resigned as Congress President. It was a delicate and unpleasant duty which Rajendra Prasad had to perform and he was "acceptable to all not because his kindly nature stirred no controversy but because he stood steadfast as a symbol of service and discipline".[29] Rajendra Prasad suffered like thousands, during the '*Quit India*' movement and convinced Gandhi that it would be cowardly for the Satyagrahis not to rise against the increased repressive policies of the government.

VIII

Meanwhile the hydra-headed demand of Pakistan grew in its intensity. Rajendra Prasad discussed its anatomy with the leadership in the Congress also. In order to have a more intimate look at the demand he worked harder still and produced his mounmental work, in 1946, *India divided.* The book is a tribute to his unflinching patriotism, his inherent faith in communal harmony and it also exposes in an objective manner the opportunism, intransigence and ruthlessness of an unsavoury leadership.

In 1946 the writing on the wall was clear. In the Interim Government that was formed on August 24 that year, Rajendra Prasad was taken as the Minister for Food and Agriculture. It was, once again, a very difficult job, of course entrusted to the person most suited to do it conscientiously. Ravaged by war, India, like the other countries, faced a critical situation on account of acute food shortage and semi-famine conditions in some parts of the country. Rajendra Prasad was alive to the problems and by his immediate and long term plans, he gave an optimistic turn to the situation, "The crux of the food policy initiated by Rajendra Prasad was that it sought to make dependence on foreign imports less and less, encourage procurement and, in course of time bring the country to a stage when normal conditions would prevail."[30] In a little over sixteen months Rajendra Prasad transformed the entire food-front.

On December 11, 1946 Rajendra Prasad was unanimously elected President of the Constituent Assembly. It was the Nation's humble tribute to the struggles and determination of a patriot. As the Constituent Assembly concluded its mammoth

task of drafting free India's constitution under Rajendra Prasad's watchful erudition, he humbly declared :

> "It was a unique victory which was achived by the unique method taught by the Father of the Nation—Mahatma Gandhi—and it is upto us to preserve and protect the independence that we have won and to make it really bear fruit for the man in the street."[31]

The proceedings of the Constituent Assembly bear ample testimony to the services rendered by Rajendra Prasad. His constitutionalism, democratic values and mature juristic insight were watch-words for the founding fathers. The Indian Constitution bears his impact in an ample measure.

Like George Washington, Rajendra Prasad was once again the choice of the Nation as Republican India's first President. There can be no two opinions the Rajendra Prasad's "unostentatious, simple dignity, coupled with his experience, scholarship and balanced judgment, easily made him the ideal counsel and guide."[32]

IX

We are much too near Rajendra Prasad to assess the far reaching impact his two-term Presidentship has brought about, and will continue to be there in the healthiest of traditions, on Indian Presidency and constitutional evolution. However, it would be only correct to say that *the Presidency today in a large measure is what Dr. Rajendra Prasad has made it.*"[33]

As President, Rajendra Prasad reminded all of a true Gandhite and lived upto the accolade Sarojini Naidu gave him *he was to Gandhi what John was to Jesus Christ.*[34] He acted always in the best interests of the people, in the absence of any conventions and traditions of our own—one must not forget. He never interfered in the day to day working and he upheld the constitutionality of his powers and position. His frequent meetings with ministers, the letters to the Prime Minister, policy statements, erudite commentaries, scrupulous scrutiny of mercy-petitions, Bills, treaties and state papers, all and many more, may be cited as instances that taught us how an elected President should conduct himself in a parliamentary democracy. When Rajendra Prasad

publicly declared the need for thinking afresh on Indian Presidency in his address to the Law Institute of India, he was only trying to separate the wheat from the chaff. "These suggestions not unexpectedly met with initial opposition. But its pertinence was gererally acknowledged."[35]

Rajendra Prasad took to the uncomfortably ceremonial duties of the Presidency as if he was made to measure. His honorific, glittering, exacting and effortless performance as India's First Citizen was bedecked with dedicated sobriety, sanctified decorum universal encomiums. Constitutional *pundits* all over the world, gradually developed veneration for Indian Presidency as Rajendra Prasad lived it.

In the din and bustle of political quackery, in the consuming tornado of shifting allegiances, in full view of political schizophrenics and fully alive to the demands of a constitution in the making, Rajendra Prasad gave an object lesson of how duty ought to be kept above all considerations. The Rashtrapati Bhawan, for long an enigma, was democratised by Rajendra Prasad. In many ways, the Presidency for him was a self-imposed abnegation, though he was never, nor intended to be, a caged-bird.

Rajendra Prasad relinquished Presidentship in May 1962, having refused to continue for a third term. He retired to Sadaqat Ashram, near Patna, to devote the rest of days in public service and to bring his reminiscences uptodate. Ill-health continued to haunt him, however, and the end came suddenly on February 28, 1963. He was 78 years young. A significant chapter of Indian history thus came to a brilliant close, yet another began. The life that began in obsecure Zeradei had run its full cycle.

Sarojini Naidu had once said : *"One has need of a golden pen dipped in honey to write about Babu Rajendra Prasad's unique personality.*"[36] In a characteristic tribute paid to Rajendra Prasad, *The London Times* wrote :

> "Until the archives of the new Government of India are thrown upon to the scrutiny of historians, no one can know the practical extent of the influence which Rajendra Prasad exerted over his famous, brilliant but temperamental Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru."[37]

X

A great fighter, Rajendra Prasad, The Good, was a prince among patriots. A political Rishi, Gandhi's greatest legacy and his greatest memorial apostle of simplicity, embodiment of humanity, he was a fervent champion of the dispossessed. Linguist, lawyer, humanist, statesman, author and journalist, voracious reader, thinker, conoisseur of culture, reformer, administrator, reconciler, political-realist, pacifist—Rajendra Prasad possessed the many splendoured versatility of a Patriarch.

Like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, he spiritualised public life. He was kind affectionate, considerate, inspiring, a tower of strength, ethical in thought, word and action. Rajendra Prasad had the courage of his conviction. His life and services shall for ever serve as a saga of scriptural *Karmayoga.*

"He lives, he wakes—'its Death is dead, not he."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, Bombay, 1957, p. 29.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 35, *et. seq.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
4. "The aim of the organisation was to help students in their studies, equip them with a knowledge of current affairs, and help build their character. The students had also to render some social service." *Ibid.*, p. 41.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
6. *Ibid* , p. 52.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 66,
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
13. *Ibid..* p. 97.
14. *Ibid.*, p.107.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*,
18. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67. Rajendra Prasad also disagreed with Jawaharlal Nehru at that time and believed that dominion status was an ideal good enough under the existing circumstances, *cf. Ibid.*, p. 290.
24. *cf*, *Ibid.*, p. 267.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
28. *cf.*, *Ibid.*, p. 396.
29. *cf.*, M. Brecher, *Nehru : A Political Biography*, (London, 1959), p. 381.
30. S. M. Wasi : *President Prasad : A Biography*, (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 157-58.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
33. *The Hindustan Times*, March 1, 1963, p. 7.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *The Hindustan Times*, March 3, 1965, p. 6.

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TRIBUTE TO RASHTRAPATI DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

N.G. RANGA

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of our Republic was the product of the Congress movement. He was our beloved Rashtrapati for two consecutive terms from 1952 to 1962. Though essentially has a man of peace and often called "Ajat Shatru" (a man who no enemies), he withstood the crisis which arose during the Second World War very bravely.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad who was affectionately addressed as 'Rajen Babu' not only by Gandhiji but by all the Congressmen, joined Mahatma Gandhi as early as in 1917 during Gandhiji's very first struggle—popularly known as the Champaran Satyagraha—against the Imperial Government. As a trusted and devoted disciple, he stood by his mentor, Gandhiji right up to his 'Swargarohan'.

I had the good fortune of having received his support in 1935 in my efforts to develop the All India Kisan Congress. Subsequently also, when I was the President of the All India Kisan Congress and Rajen Babu a Cabinet Minister, we continued to work together in serving the cause of Kisans. During the Second World War, when the continuation of war-time controls over food procurement had become a bitter bone of contention between Jawaharlalji and many of us in the Kishan Congress, Gandhiji supported our contention against the much-hated food controls.

And Rajen Babu who had great loyalty for Gandhiji and immense affection for Kisans, even preferred to resign from the Cabinet on this issue.

Rajen Babu was very much devoted to the Gandhian constructive programme and sincerely propagted Khadi and hand-spinning all over India. His work at Sadaquat Ashram and Acharya Kripalani's Khadi Centre of Meerut were equally popular, Both of them believed in self-employment of our Kisans and artisans and had appreciation for my thesis on "Economic Freedom through Self-employment".

Rajen Babu proved to be the best and softest exponent of Sardar Patel's order of discipline and Code for Congressmen. No wonder, the both came to be known as devoted disciples of Mahatma Gandhi.

It was always a wonder to many of us in the Congress movement, especially during Rajen Babu's ministerial period as to how Gandhiji's softest warning used to be transposed into effective controls and accepted and obeyed implicity by millions of Congressmen.

As the President of the Constituent Assembly, he used to offer his sane advice to the legal pundits to adjust their conservative approach to the revolutionary pulls from many of us. It was always a marvel to us as to how he and Dr. Ambedkar used to hammer our progressive formulae which would harmonise progressive thoughts and approaches within the constraints of historical limitations. On the whole, Rajen Babu's leadership helped in many ways not only Dr. Ambedkar but also other members of the Constituent Assembly of socialist persuasion.

When the Constituent Assembly Members assembled in all Constitution Club to informally decide as to who should be chosen as our first Rashtrapati, I still feel happy and satisfied for playing a crucial role in supporting Rajen Babu on whose name Jawaharlalji had certain reservations. Once I listed my reasons for suggesting Rajen Babu's name for the high office, Jawaharlalji ceased to press his suggestion.

Rajen Babu, as our first Rashtrapati, laid down scrupulous yet progressive precedents of constitutional proprieties and moral conduct, which continue to serve as a beacon light to the succeeding Presidents. On occasions, when he felt that Jawaharlalj's attitude was imperious or overbearing and trespassed the well-

defined norms, though not the written wordings of the Constitutional provisions, he was wise enough to avoid unpleasantness by saggesting a reference to the Supreme Court. Never did he allow any difference of opinion between him and the Prime Minister to develop into a head-on collision. His successors found those precedents as highly useful and consoling, if not inspiring.

Rajen Babu has proved to be the most agreeable colleague that Jawaharlalji could have from amongst Gandhians, while Rajaji proved to be the ablest intellectual in administration and Congress confabulations. It was indeed God's decision that both Rajen Babu and Rajaji should live as the best comrades and greatest confidants of Gandhiji.

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DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD : HIS ROLE AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF INDIA

BALRAJ MADHOK

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who presided over India's Constituent Assembly and was later elected first President of our Republic was an embodiment of Hindu ideal of 'simple living and high thinking'. He was a great scholar, an outstanding jurist and an eminent freedom fighter. He left his impact on many fields of our national life. The crowning glory, however, was his role as the President of India in the formative years of our new born Republic.

Being a great jurist and having been the President of the Constituent Assembly, he had full grasp of the letter and spirit of the Indian Constitution. As the first President of India, it fell upon him to "preserve protect and defend" the supreme law of the land.

Under the Constitution of India, it is the President who is at the apex of the Indian polity. He is not only the Head of the State but the entire executive power also vests in him. He is also the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces of the country. Elected by the people of India through their elected representatives in Parliament and the State legislatures, he represents the entire nation and not any party, group or class.

The traditions and precedents that were set by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in regard to the position and role of the President in relation to that of the Prime Minister and his personal equation with the first Prime Minister of free India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, are of great significance for understanding and evaluating

the Indian Constitution, in practice. As in the case of the Union and the States, the relations between the President and the Prime Minister during the early years of our republic were guided more by personal rapport the two leaders had as colleagues and co-workers of the Congress party than by strict constitutional requirements. As a matter of fact, this extra-constitutional relationship between the Head of the State and the Head of the Government, stood in the way of the Indian Constitution coming into full play.

Pandit Nehru enjoyed supreme position in the Congress organisation as well as in the government particularly after the death of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in December 1950. As a dedicated and committed Congressman, Dr. Rajendra Prasad always looked upon Pandit Nehru as his leader. Pandit Nehru too was conscious of his superior position. While he showed due respect and deference to the office of President held by Rajen Babu, he believed, in practice if not in theory, in the supremacy of the Prime Minister. The personal equation between him and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, therefore, gave a twist to the relationship between the two top offices of the polity which was not strictly in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad knew fully well that Constitution had conferred on the President a supervisory role also. But he was too gentle and Pandit Nehru was too assertive and tactful to allow a situation to be created which might smack of discord Pandit Nehru saw to it that the President was kept informed of all the day today developments inside and outside the country and his concurrence was invariably obtained on all important decisions and appointments. Dr. Rajendra Prasad scrutinised an appointments and decisions taken in his name and his opinion obviously used to receive the attention. He was particularly careful with regard to the imposition of President's rule in any State. But toward the close of his second term as President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had developed a feeling that the office of the President was being devalued in practice. He, therefore, suggested examination in depth of the position of the President under the Indian Constitution.

So long as Dr. Rajendra Prasad remained President he maintained the independence, dignity and prestige of the high office. As a young member of Lok Sabha, I had the opportunity to meet him and discuss issues of public importance. I was impressed by his dignity, humility and vast knowledge of national affairs and the

Constitution. He kept an eye on the performance of members in the Parliament and quite often gave encouragement to promising members.

The political developments after 1967 have somehow created a feeling in some quarters that the Parliamentary system of the British model, in which the Prime Minister is supreme and the Head of the State as merely a figure-head, is not suited to Indian conditions. A change over to Presidential system of the American model has been suggested by a number of people. According to my reading of the Indian Constitution the present system can become more effective if the office of the President is given back the role and position that was visualised for it by the founding fathers of our Constitution.

The character and personality of the person who holds any office has much to do with preservation of the dignity of that office. The office of the President of India has somehow been devalued and it is, therefore, high time that steps we taken to elect the President on the basis of merit without any party-whip being issued to the members of the electoral college, directing them to vote a particular candidate. The voters must be encouraged to vote according to their conscience for the best man, irrespective of his political or party affiliations. Unlike the Prime Minister who has to be a party man the President of India should be a man above parties.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was conscious of his national position and felt that he must play a unifying role and work for strengthening the national unity. He, therefore, laid stress in his speeches on the basic factors of national unity. Speaking at Trivandrum on 7 February 1956 he called upon the people living near the Kanyakumari to believe that "the areas at the foot of the Himalayas are yours, and permit me, living as I do at the foot of the Himalayas, to treat Kanyakumari as mine. Unless we develop this sense of unity and patriotism and subordinate local, parochial, castes and communal considerations to the consideration of the country at large we might lose the freedom which we have attained and our democracy might be very short-lived".

Dr. Rajendra Prasad considered Sanskrit to be a major factor for Indian unity and advocated giving it due position in our national life. In the course of his Presidential speech at the annual conference of Sanskrit Vishwa Parishad on 11 November 1955 he

observed :

"In hoary past, when in the modern sense of the term there were hardly any means of communications, the whole country had more or less a common education. It was Sanskrit which provided a common medium of expression and literary effort. While regional languages in varying stages of developments were spoken in various regions. Sanskrit truly was the *lingua franca*, it enjoyed what we might call the status of national language of India for many centuries. Whatever the status that we might agree to give formally to this great language, the fact remains that it provide the common fund from which the growing languages of India derive sustenance."

Besides giving due recognition to Sanskrit, he advocated adoption of Devnagiri as the common script for writing all the Indian languages with a view to promote national unity. Speaking at Andhra Sahitya Academy at Hyderabad on 7 August, 1957, he said :

"Now that we have achieved political freedom it is incumbent upon us to behave and carry on our affairs in such a way that the independence which we have won may last for ever and ever. . . I was thinking how we could help this unification still further. I have had some experience in this which I want to share with you. Many years ago, there used to be published "Devnagar" which was run by a judge of Calcutta High Court named Sharda Charan "Devnagar" carried articles in different languages of India but in the Devnagri script. We found that we could understand a great deal of the other languages through the Devnagiri script I have ever since felt that it is impossible for the provincial languages to be better known and understood if we could render them in one script. Fortunately, alphabets of all Indian languages, except Tamil, are the same. That is the case not only in India but outside India also. For example, Ceylon, Burma and Thailand have the same alphabets as ourselves. The script is different but sounds are the same. We have this advantage. If we could adopt one script, it would be easier for people of one language to undeastand people speaking other languages. Devnagiri script is being mentioned because Sanskrit is always written in

Devnagiri script and it is already known all over the country."

These ideas of Dr. Rajendra Prasad about the unifying role of Sanskrit and adoption of Devnagiri as the common script for all Indian languages have become more relevant now when new dangers to national unity have arisen.

The need of the hour is the restoration of the authority, dignity and prestige of the office of the President of India as visualised by founding fathers of Indian Constitution and proper understanding and propagation of the basic factors of Indian Unity. The nation can remember Dr. Rajendra Prasad best only by imbibing his ideas and ideals because as Plato said "Ideas and ideals rule the world and not the man."

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DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD: A GREAT LIFE GREATLY LIVED

SUSHILA NAYAR*

Dr. Rajendra Prasad stands out as one of the most luminous stars in the galaxy of national leaders who led India to freedom along the path charted by Mahatma Gandhi. He is also among the very few who remained steadfast till to the end to the ideals and values enunciated by the Father of the Nation. Whenever there was confusion in the ranks or the leadership of the Congress and the dominant sections found it easier to stray from the narrow path of non-violence, which was the case on a number of occasions much to the distress of Gandihji, Rajendra Prasad remained unshaken in his conviction that Gandhiji's path was the only way and continued to work for the cause.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was born on 3 December 1884 at Zeradei in Saran district of North Bihar. He came from a prosperous Kayastha family that held considerable landed property in 1896 when he was barely twelve, he was married to Rajbansidevi. He had his university education in Calcutta from where he passed his M.A. in 1907. Later he did B.L. in 1910 and M.L. in 1915, for he wanted to make of himself a successful lawyer. However he practised law only by fits and starts from 1911 to 1920, first at the Calcutta High Court and than at the Patna High Court, in between he also taught for two

*Dr. Sushila Nayar an eminent Gandhian, freedom fighter and social worker.

years at a college in Calcutta.

As a student, Rajendra Prasad had a brilliant academic record throughout and as a lawyer he had made a name for himself in a very short time.

But even while he was struggling to establish his legal practice. Rajendra Prasad was reaching out into areas of public work in 1912, he served as secretary of the Reception Committee at the session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. In 1913 he presided over the Bihar Students' Conference held at Monghyr.

Rajendra Prasad came to know Gandhiji in 1917 during the Champaran Satyagraha. The poor villagers of Champaran were being exploited by the Indigo Planters. The exploitation had been going on for many years and inspite of all efforts by the Champaran cultivators, including resort to law courts, relief eluded them. The foreign government was with the exploiters. Even the law courts failed to give justice to the poor ryots who were forced to grow indigo on 3 out of 20 parts of their best land and were paid very poorly. There were many other illegal exactions by the indigo planters and their officials.

There had been revolts and many cultivators had gone to jail and suffered in various other ways at the hands of the planters and their assistant. But the exploitation went on. The cultivators were very poor, most of them being on the verge of starvation. There were no educational or health facilities for them or their women and children. They had to work and live under inhuman and most humiliating conditions.

Rajkumar Shukla one of the victims of Indigo planters. succeeded in making Gandhiji interested in their problem at the Lucknow Congress in 1916 and brought him to Bihar to see things to himself early in 1917. He took him to Rajendra Prasad's house at Patna. The owner was not in town and the servants, thinking them to be poor clients of their master, put them in an out-house. They did not even allow them the use of the lavatory and bathroom. Gandhiji contracted Muzharul Haq, a leading lawyer and Congress leader of Patna, whom he had known in England. The latter took him to his own house and the same night Gandhiji left for Champran along with Rajkumar Shukla. At Muzzaffarpur, he was received by Acharya Kripalani who was a Professor in one of the local colleges. Rajendra Prasad was greatly embarrassed when he

learnt how Gandhiji was treated at his house at Patna. He soon joined Gandhiji in Champaran as one of his disciples.

Gandhiji having decided to make an enquiry into the complaints of indigo cultivators, began taking statements from all the victims. Before starting his enquiry, he met the district authorities as well as the officers of the Planters Association. They tried to obstruct him. An externment order was passed on him by the District Magistrate which he disobeyed. Rajendra Prasad and other lawyers were greatly impressed. They decided to continue the enquiry if he was sent to jail and follow him to jail, if necessary it delighted Gandhiji and he said that success would then be theirs for sure. The externment order was withdrawn in the end and the enquiry was allowed to continue.

Gandhiji needed interpreters, workers with legal knowledge and scribes to record the statements of the peasantry. A number of public-spirited lawyers volunteered—foremost among them being Gorakh Prasad, Brij Kishore Prasad, Rajendra Prasad, Ramnavami Prasad and Dharnidhar Prasad. Beginning from 17 April 1917 they set themselves to recording statements of peasants, first in Motihari and then in Bettiah, working from early morning till late in the evening and had, in a matter of just three weeks, collected no less than 4,000 statements, on the basis of which Gandhiji could sent a report to the authorities, which resulted in the setting up a government enquiry with Gandhiji as a member to represent the indigo cultivators. The report of his committee was for putting and end to the centuries' old exploitation of the Champaran indigo's cultivators. Writing about Rajendra Prasad and Brijkishore Prasad in his autobiography, Gandhiji says they were a matchless pair, who devotion made it impossible for him to take a single step without their help.

Rajendra Prasad's family was of orthodoex Hindus. He could take food cooked only by a Brahmin or a man of his own caste. He was not used to doing any work with his own hands. Almost all the lawyers who had come to help Gandhiji were in the same boat and had brought their servants. But under Gandhiji's discipline, they learnt to do their own work and do without the help of servants. Rajendra Prasad and others would draw water from the well for their bath and wash their clothes.

They learnt to clean their rooms and wash their eating utensils after meals and they took turns to clean the cooking utensils. They learnt to eat together and became one family irrespective of their caste. These were revolutionary changes in Bihar in those days.

Rajen Babu and other lawyers sat on the floor with small desk in front of them from sunrise to sunset recording statements, with a brief lunch break and a short rest. In the evening, they went for a walk with Gandhiji and had talks with him which served as their general education class.

Gandhiji was not satisfied with working merely for the end of the exploitation of the villagers by the indigo planters, in which he was successful. He wanted to improve the living condition of the villagers of Champaran. He made Kasturba and other Ashram women distribute simple medicines and run schools, while the enquiry was going on. The women looked after the sick and taught the children and adults in the villages the three R's besides giving them health education and telling them about sanitation and other rules of healthy living. Many workers joined Gandhiji in this work from all over India and Rajendra Prasad and his colleagues had their initiation into constructive work.

Rajendra Prasad never looked back. From them on, he was always at the vanguard of all activities undertaken by Gandhiji In 1918, he founded the Patna English daily *Searchlight* and in 1920 *Desh*, a Hindi weekly.

When Gandhiji started the Non-Co-Operation Movement in 1920, Rajendra Prasad was in it from the very inception. At Patna he set up, along with with Mazharul Haq, a Swaraj Sabha to carry the movement forward. He also set up a National College and served as its Principal. Under his guidance, Non-Co-Operation Movement made rapid progress in Bihar, with the message of swaraj, khaddar and prohibition being carried to the farthest villages of the province Rajendra Prasad in his book *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi* says that he visited almost every sub-division in the whole province.

When Gandhiji called off the contemplated Civil Disobedience Movement following the Chauri Chaura violence in February 1922, he drew a lot of criticism from large sections of Congressmen and many gave expression to their resentment at the meeting

of the All India Congress Committee that was held in Delhi towards the end of the month. Rajendra Prasad was one of the few who found themselves in entire agreements with the course adopted by Gandhiji.

When later in March, Gandhiji was arrested and tried, Rajendra Prasad was present in the court and when the judge pronounced the sentence of six years imprisonment on Gandhiji Rajendra Prasad could not contain his emotion and burst into tears.

In Gandhiji's absence, the Congress split in two—prochangers', who wanted to enter legistures, and 'nochangers' who wanted to stick to non-co-operation and boycott of law courts, government schools, colleges, legislatures, etc. The 'prochangers' were led by stalwarts like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Madan Mohan Malaviya and the Ali brothers. The 'nochangers' included lesser known young congressmen like Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalchari, Vallabhbhai Patel and others. But they proved more than a match for the stalwarts.

At the Gaya Congress held in December 1922, Rajendra Prasad was Secretary of the Reception Committee and as such, bore the brunt of all the preparations for the Congress. The main problem faced by the Committee was the paucity of funds. Rajendra Prasad, with his indefatigable energy set out on the task of collection of funds and in a very few days, succeeded in collecting several thousands of rupees. He gave credit for this success to the lesson learnt from Gandhiji. Impressed by his example, other Bihar leaders also joined the collection drive and there was enough money available.

At the Gaya Congress Session, C.R. Das, who had been elected President at Ahmedabad Congress, but was then in jall and could not preside, was installed as such. He favoured Council-entry. Raiendra Prasad was among the majority, which stuck to the boycott of the Councils. The 'nochangers' carried the day.

Rajendra Prasad was elected Secretary of the All India Congress Committee at this session, and in that capacity, toured a number of provinces in the company of Rajaji, another prominent and uncompromising 'no-changer'. Through the ensuing years. Rajendra Prasad carried on sustained work for the furtherance of Khadi and national education.

Gandhiji, on his release in 1924 on health grounds, decided to hand over the political work of the Congress to 'pro-changers' and devote himself to constructive work. He set up organisation like the All India Spinners' Association, the All India Village Industries Association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh and Harijan Sevak Sangh to carry on constructive work. Rajendra Prasad was at the forefront in every one of those activities. His time was so thoroughly taken up with these tasks that he ceased even to take any interest in the controversy relating to Council-entry, From 1923 to 1927, he devoted all his time to these activities, except for presiding over sessions of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1926 and 1927.

During the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, Rajendra Prasad was constantly on the move, guiding batches of satyagrahis going out to make salt. He inspected salt manufacture and auctioned salt at public meetings. There were assaults by the police on crowd of satyagrahis and arests on a large scale. But there never was any instance of violent behaviour on the part of the satyagrahis. Rajendra Prasad himself received lathi blows from the police.

In the early stages of the movement, the authorities shrank from laying hands on Rajendra Prasad for fear of the disturbances that might follow. Eventully however, he was taken into custody on 6 July 1930 and sentenced to a term of six months' imprisonment. He spent the time in the Hazaribagh Jail where he was transferred from Chhapra.

On 15 January 1934 a devastating earthquake struck North Bihar. It was of such intensity that tremors were felt from Lahore to Shillong and as for south as Bombay and Bezwada (Vijayawara) The disaster took a toll of 25,000 lives. The loss of property was incalculable. The entire city areas were razed to the ground. Roads and bridges were destroyed. Though the calamity took in its sweep an area of about 30,000 squre miles, the most affected places were Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Purnea and Bhagalpur.

Rajendra Prasad was in jail when the calamity came. But he was released soon after and though not in good health, immediately, took charge of the relief work and organised it in a systematic manner. The response from all over India was quick and generous. No less than seventy-four relief organisations contributed their mite to serve the injured and the homeless. But the

main burnt of the work was borne by the Bihar Central Relief Committee, of which Dr. Rajendra Prasad was President and the saving spirit. Rajendra Prasad prevailed upon Gandhiji, who was then touring the South in the Harijan cause, to visit stricken Bihar and Gandhiji did tour Bihar in the company with Rajendra Babu from 12 March to 9 April. He also persuaded Gandhiji to let him have the service of J.C. Kumarappa to organise the account-keeping and get the account audited. This was done. Some people later tried to do mud-slinging on Rajendra Prasad regarding the use of large sums collected by the Relief Committee. Rajen Babu had two volumes of audited accounts ready, which silenced the critics.

Following the Congress Session of 1938, held under the Presidentship of Subhash Bose, the organization was caught up in a crisis in consequence of the impatience shown by Subhas Bose on the question of launching a mass civil disobedience movement and the unwillingness of the Working Committee to go along with their President. The differences were so wide that there did not appear to be any possibility of the President and his Working Committee pulling on together and Gandhiji, therefore, asked Subhash Bose to accept the resignation of the members of the Working Committee and choose his own Working Committee or to resign. When Bose resigned on 29 April 1939 Rajendra Prasad was elected President to steer the Congress through the troubled times. Rajendra Babu discharged his President with great efficiency and single-minded devotion.

When the war broke out, the Congress was under the necessity to redefine its position with regard to its creed of non-violence, for it had to decide what attitude it would adopt towards the War. The dominant section of the Working Committee was of the view that if the British agreed to concede the demand for a National Government, the Congress should support the war. But Gandhiji pointed out that supporting the war would imply supporting violence and participating in it. This, he said, he could not be a party to. Rajendra Prasad was fully in accord with Gandhiji, so much so that he tendered his resignation from the Working Committee. The only other member to no so was Khan Abul Gaffar Khan, another devoted follower of Gandhiji and a staunch adherent of non-violence. Rajendra Babu was persuaded to withdraw his resignation, because it was pointed out that there was no

immediate prospect of the Congress going out to assist the British in the War till they had accepted the demand for a National Government Gaffar Khan, however, did not relent.

The British did not respond to the offer of the Congress to help the war effort if India was given self-government and in consequence the Congress unitedly lauched the individual civil disobedience movement under the guidance of Gandhiji. Rajendra Prasad, not being too well, did not offer satyagraha. An ailing man courting arrest, Gandhiji said, would mean placing on the Government the responsibility of providing medical treatment for him, or they would be forced to abstain from arresting him. Neither course would be proper.

As the war progressed, with the rentless advance of the Japanese towards the shores of India and with the countries to the south-east of India already under their heels, the question of the defence of India became paramount. Gandhiji was convinced that any defence to be undertaken could only be non-violent. The All-India Congress Committee met at Allahabad in April 1942 to consider the situation. Gandhiji did not attend but sent a draft resolution. This resolution was opposed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajagopalchari, Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Azad and others. Rajendra Prasad then came out with another draft which he thought might be found more acceptable. Then, on second thoughts, he withdrew it, not knowing how Gandhiji would take it. Gandiji's resolution was of course drastically amended by the Working Committee, but Gandhiji said he could carry on with it. At this meeting of the A.I.C.C., Rajendra Babu made a singal contribution.

Latter, following the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay and the passing of the Quit India Resolution, Government struck at the Congress. Rajendra Babu was in Patna. He had not gone to Bombay as he was not well. He was taken into custody on 9 August. He was at that time a very ill man. His health had shattered in jails and in constant touring of the rural areas. He suffered from Asthma and also amoebic collitis. The dry climate of Wardha suited him and he came there often to meet Gandhiji and to recuperate his health; when he could.

The Quit India Movement elicited the most enthusiastic response in Bihar, though to the distress of Rajendra Babu the response was not wholly non-violent. Railway tracks were

damaged, telephone and telegraph wires were cut, and many police stations occupied by the people. For a very long time, railway traffic remained disrupted. In some places, Rajendra Babu reports, the writ of the Government had ceased to run for weeks. The leaders were all in jail and the people thought that so long as there was no loss of life, their activities would be considered non-violent, in which, Gandhiji later explained, they had been wrong.

Rajendra Prasad was released from jail on 15 June 1945 along with the other members of the Congress Working Committee and participated on behalf of the Congress in the Simla Conference convened by the Viceroy from 25 June to 14 July 1945.

When the first National Government—an Interim one—came to be formed under Jawaharlal Nehru on 2 September 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad joined the Government as Minister for Food and Agriculture. Soon he was called to a higher office—when on 11 December 1946 he took over as President of the Constituent Assembly. His handling of the deliberations of this office lasted three years till 1949. On 17 November 1947 he had to take over as President of the Congress as well when Acharya Kirpalani relinquished that office.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was not only the first President of Free India, but also the longest serving President. He was elected to the office first on 26 January 1950. He served as Interim President till 13 May 1952, when he was formally elected as President after the first general elections in India and again after the general elections in 1957, to serve till 12 May 1962. A large number of people wanted him to seek office again. But he had no desire to continue. Also his health had considerably detetiorated. He retired and went to Patna, where he stayed at Sadaquat Ashram. His long tenure as President of India was a period when India was highly respected and appreciated all over the World. He lent to the office of the President great dignity and distinction.

Rajendra Prasad was a scholar of note and many Universities honoured themselves by honouring him with various doctorate degrees. Hs was awarded D. Lit. by Patna University, LL.D. by Sagar University, Mysore University and Osmania University and Vidya Vachaspati by the Banaras University.

Rajendra Babu's most abiding qualities of character were his humility, his spirit of self-effacement and sacrifice, and his total dedication to the cause of the country. He was a deeply religious

man. Gandhiji's word to him was law and to Gandhiji's ideals he clung all his life. My brother Pyarelalji and I often had the honour of joining him in his evening prayers along with his family members in the Mogul Gardens, and join him at meals in their private dining, room afterwards. It was a joy to see him play with his grandchildren and see his solicitude towards the smallest man in his service.

At Patna, Rajendra Prasad continued to take interest in Gandhian work and thoughts and met many visiting scholars and dignitaries. He was especially interested in anti-nuclear campaign.

He passed away in 1963 and was cremated on the Banks of the Ganga in the orthodox Hindu manner. With Rajen Babu's passing away, closed, perhaps, the most glorious chapter of India's Freedom struggle and the golden dawn of our independence years.

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DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

JAGJIVAN RAM

Long before the Gandhian era had set in, there was born, on 3 December 1884, in an obscure village in the Saran district of North Bihar, Rajendra Prasad, whose life was to be an embodiment of the Gandhian principles. He was to Gandhiji, to quote Sarojni Naidu, what John was to Christ. Jawaharlal called him the symbol of Bharat and found "truth looking at you through those eyes." As early as 1922 C. R. Das, the President of the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress, remarked, "At the moment Rajendra Prasad appears to be the sole excuse for a further honest trial of Gandhism to solve a political problem." When this view was reported to Motilal Nehru in January 1923, his reaction was almost identical : "Das is certainly correct. We have given a fair trial to Gandhism for over two years. It seems to me that the only good result it has yielded—I do not say it will not yield better or more results—is Babu Rajendra Prasad." Four years later Vithalbhai Patel remarked, "The one argument against the discontinuance, of the Gandhian cult is Rajendra Prasad." Gandihji himself once said of him : "There is at least one man who would not hesitate to take the cup of poison from my hands." No wonder Gunther called him the heart of the Cogress organisation. Another publicist wrote that Mahatma Gandhi with his uncanny insight picked out and groomed three of his colleagues for important roles in national life. In Jawaharlal he saw the dynamism of youth that never ages and a soaring idealism intent

on a synthesis of ethical values and socio-economic objectives of modern revolutions. In Sardar he saw the great pragmatist and the man of iron will who knew how to get things done. In Rajendra Prasad he saw a great deal of himself.

Rajendra Prasad's great uncle, Chaudhur Lal, built the fortunes of the family, a zamindari income of Rs, 7,000 per year and substantial farm lands. He was the Dewan of the Hathwa Raj, highly respected by all, honest, loyal and efficient. Rajendra Prasad's father, Mahadev Sahay, was a country gentleman, a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit. His hobbies were wrestling and horticulture and he took delight in providing free Ayurvedic and Unani treatment to patients who flocked to him. Rajendra Prasad's mother, Kamleshwari Devi, was a devout lady who would not give up her evening bath and Pooja even though plagued by a cough which eventually proved fatal. Every day she would tell stories from the Ramayana to young Rajendra, as he huddled close to her, eager and receptive, waiting for the light to dawn to peep into the windowless bedroom of the old-fashioned house. No wonder the Ramayana by Tulsidas became his constant companion, though he loved to browse occasionally on the Upanishads and other scriptures also.

The family shunned ostentations, lived simply and mixed freely with the co-villagers. Disparities were not irritating. There was a sense of community, fellow-feeling and kindliness. All shared in the festivals and the Poojas. The flow of village life was quiet and gentle. All this left a deep impress on young Rajendra's mind. The village came to symbolise peace and repose.

At the age of five young Rajendra was, according to the practice in the community to which he belonged, put under a Maulavi who taught him Persian. Later, he was taught Hindi and arithmetic. After the completion of this traditional education he was put in the Chapra Zilla School, from which he moved to R.K. Ghosh's Academy in Patna in order to be with his only brother, Mahendra Prasad, who was eight years older than him and who had joined the Patna College. When Mahendra Prasad moved to Calcutta in 1897, Rajendra was admitted into the Hathwa High School. Soon he rejoined the Chapra Zilla School, from where he passed the Entrance examination of the Calcutta University at the age of eighteen, in 1902, standing first in the

first division. When it is remembered that the educational jurisdiction of the Calcutta University extended from Sadiya, the easternmost frontier of British India, to a little beyond Peshawar on the north-west, the feat appears truly remarkable. He had been married for five years at that time. His wife Rajbanshi Devi was a true-to-tradition Hindu lady, merging her identity totally in that of the husband.

After passing the Entrance examination Rajendra Prasad joined the Presidency College, Calcutta, and both brothers lived together for a time in a room of the Eden Hindu Hostel. A plaque still commemorates his stay, for practically the whole of his University career, in that room. Not many from Bihar had joined that metropolitan institution. But, before long, Rajendra Prasad gained immense popularity. This was demonstrated in a remarkable early moment in 1904 when as a third year student he won in the first annual election for the post of Secretary of the College Union against a senior student belonging to a rich aristocratic family of Calcutta. Those were days when junior students did not speak to their seniors unless spoken to. Rajendra Prasad had, moreover, neither sought nor worked for the post. Dr. P.K. Roy, the Principal, in whose presence the election had taken place by show of hands, was astounded by the result, more than a thousand against seven, and enquired as to what made Rajendra Prasad so popular. The great scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose and the highly respected P.C. Ray wanted him to offer Science, but he preferred Arts, for though he had topped in I.A. he had not topped in the Science subjects. While his remarkably distinguished academic career continued and he capped it with a first in the M.A. and a First in Master of Law, other ideas occupied his mind and heart. He had been initiated into the cult of "Swadeshi" by his elder brother even before his arrival in Calcutta. Now he joined, while in B.A. (Hons.) Class, the Dawn Society run by Satish Chandra Mukherjee. Sister Nivedita, Surendranath Banerjea and many other luminaries gave discourses here. There were debating and eassay-writing competitions and he bagged many of the prizes. A new awareness was dawning on him. The anti-partition agitation stirred him. The processions, the slogans, the speeches touched new chords. He collected the Bihari students in Calcutta and they conducted activities similar to those conducted by the Dawn Society. The formation of the Bihari Students' Conference followed

in 1908. It was the first organisation of its kind in the whole of India. It not only led to an awakening, it nurtured and produced practically the entire political leadership of the twenties in Bihar.

At the time he set himself up as a legal practitioner in Calcutta in 1911, apprenticed to Khan Bahadur Shamsul Huda, he also joined the Indian National Congress and was elected to the A.I.C.C. A year earlier, he impressed Sir Asutosh Mukherjee so deeply that the latter offered him a Lectureship in the Presidency Law College. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the greatest political leader of India in those days, had met him in Calcutta a year earlier and had exhorted him to join the Servants of India Society in Poona. Due to lack of good management the family estate was in bad shape and Rajendra Prasad was looked upon as the retriever. But he had no doubts about what he should do. Though he could not bring himself to have a straight talk with Mahendra Prasad, his elder brother, he sought his permission and blessing to join Gokhale through a letter in which he gave vent to his innermost thoughts. "Ambitions I have none," he had concluded, "except to be of some service to the Motherland." The shock and the anguish of his brother, however, held him to the family. About that time his mother died and his only sister Bhagwati Devi, fifteen years older than him, returned to her parents' home, a widow at nineteen, and in a way, took the place of his mother.

In 1916 Rajendra Prasad shifted to Patna on the establishment of the High Court of Bihar and Orissa. Soon, he succeeded in gaining a marked ascendancy, not only over the clients and his colleagues at the Bar, but even more so on the Judges. His incisive intellect and phenomenal memory were no doubt great asserts, but what really established his supermacy, over the minds of the judges in particular, was his innate integrity and purity of character, his inability to stop to any tactics to score a point, to win a case. Often enough when his adversary failed to cite a precedent, the Judges asked Rajendra Prasad to cite a precedent against himself.

Rajendra Prasad had first seen Gandhiji at a meeting held in Calcutta in 1915 to honour him. He was called 'Karmavir Gandhi' in those days. In the December 1916 session of the Congress, held at Lucknow, he again saw Gandhiji. He knew that the Champaran Kisan leader Rajkumar Shukla and Braj Kishore Prasad had requested Gandhiji to pay a visit to Champaran. The session had also adopted a resolution on the Champaran situation.

In the April 1917 A.I.C.C. Session, held in Calcutta, Gandhiji and Rajendra Prasad sat very close to each other but he did not know that Gandhiji was to be taken to his residence in Patna on his way to Champaran. He, therefore, left for Puri when the session ended. When Gandhiji reached Rajendra Prasad's residence in Patna next morning, the servant took him to be a client and a villager and showed him the servant's bathroom and the well outside. Bare-footed, clad in half achkan, dhoti and Kathiawadi pugree, carrying in a roll his bedding and a few dhotis and some food in a tin box, Gandhiji looked very much an illiterate villager. Gandhiji did not know what to do next, when hearing of his arrival, Mazharul Haq came and took him to his palatial residence, Sikander Manzil. There was a similar situation at Muzaffarpur Junction Station where Acharya Kripalani, a Professor in the local college, had come to receive Gandhiji with a large number of students. None had seen Gandhiji. None recognised him.

On return to Patna Rajendra Babu learnt all that had happened and hastened to Motihari. He regarded his meeting with Gandhiji as the turning-point in his career. He stayed with Gandhiji till his trial was over. Thereafter, things in the country took a different course, by reason of the Rowlatt Act and the Punjab upheaval, and, in 1920, even before the Civil Disobedience and Non-Cooperation resolution of the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September had been confirmed by the regular session held in December at Nagpur, he took the plunge. He openly pledged himself to defy unrighteous laws, and resort to civil disobedience and non-cooperation and thus he constituted himself more or less as an outlaw in the eyes of the British Government in India.

The decades that followed were years of intense activity and heavy suffering. He ceased to be a Senator of the University to the regret of the British Vice-Chancellor. He withdrew his sons, Mrityunjaya and Dhananjaya, and his nephew, Janardan, from the Benares Hindu University and other schools. He wrote articles for the *Searchlight* and the *Desh* and collected funds for these papers. He toured a lot, explaining, lecturing, exhorting. He was the life-bearth of the constructive programme and a great votary of Khadi. He was the first leading political figure in the Eastern Provinces to join forces with Gandhiji at a time when the latter was without a large and effective following. Another such leader

from the West who joined Gandhiji was Vallabhbhai Patel. During the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai came closer. Rajendra Babu cherished Sardar's friendship as one of the most pleasant memories of his life. He often went to Sabarmati and toured the country with Gandhiji. He suffered several terms of rigorous imprisonment. He suffered privations for want of a regular income of his own. All the while he suffered from Asthma. He would not accept any financial assistance from the Congress or from any other source and depended mostly on his elder brother.

He was in jail when on 15 January 1934 the devastating earthquake in Bihar occured. He was released two days later. Though ailing, he set himself immediately to the task of raising funds and organising relief. The Viceroy also raised a fund for the purpose. While his fund swelled to over 38 lakhs, the Viceroy's fund, despite his great influence, resources and prestige, remainad at one third of the amount. The way relief was organised left nothing to be desired. Nationalist India expressed its admiration by electing him to be the President of the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress. Mahendra Prasad, his elder brother, had died. The Congress through a resolution remembered his social services and his devotion to the national cause.

When the Congress Ministries were formed in 1937, it was the Parlimentary Board consisting of Sardar Patel, Rajendra Babu and Maulana Azad, which really and effectively provided guidance and control. In 1939 when Subhas Chandra Bose had to be relieved of the office of the Congress President, it was Rajendra Prasad who was persuaded to face the crisis and overcome it. The Congress faced another crisis when Acharya Kripalani resigned and Rajendra Babu had to step into the breach, even though he happened to be India's Food and Agriculture Minister and President of the Constituent Assembly.

He realised that industrialism had disrupted the web of village life women and integrated for centuries. It had to be re-woven into a new pattern to be inspired by Gandian values; human needs and acquisitiveness to be regulated through self-discipline; agricultural production to be maximised; village industries to be resuscitated and their scope enlarged; the old sense of community to be recaptured. But he found that the country was unable to

resit he pull of industrialisation, even hurriedly thought-out industrialisation, and he was not happy at the development. This was one reason why he declined to accept the Chairmanship of the Planning Commission. This was why, when Wavell informally enquired what portfolio he would choose if he were to choose it for himself, he said that he hardly needed time to think about it. It had to be Food and Agriculture. Wavell was amused and there was an unspoken why. "Well," Rajendra Babu went on, "the subject is familiar to me".

He knew all that the best farmer knows about agricultural operations and practices. But he also realised that certain improvements had to be effected on those methods. The slogan 'Grow More Food' was given by him and the campaign was initiated by the Food Ministry under his guidance. He could not, however, continue for long in that Ministry and ensure compliance with the policies initiated by him. But, before he relinquished charge, he did, as Gandhiji wanted, effect decontrol of foodgrains, and though officials and public men alike had prophesied disaster, nothing untowards happened.

His stewardship of the Constituent Assembly was exemplary. He guided, regulated, controlled, but did so with such infinite patience, skill, grace and firmness that only none had a sense of grievance but are felt that the discussions were always full, free and frank and left nothing to be desired. During the very first session of the constituent Assembly, he had announced that though the Assembly was born under limitations it would ourgrow those and function as a sovereign body recognising no outside authority. The proceedings of the last day of the Constituent Assembly read like pages from a book of tributes and, in a way, indicate how loved and respected he was by each section of the House.

His elevation to the Presidentship in 1950 came as a matter of course. There were some doubts in some quarters. Could a person who was tempermentally a peasant, who lived and dressed like one, impress in an office where ceremonialism and gilded trappings counted ? But nothing else was possible. He was the only choice and there could not be another.

As President, he exercised his moderating influence and moulded policies or actions so silently and unobtrusively that many were led to think that, unlike any other Head of State, he neither resigned nor ruled.

He never worried about what people said about him. He never looked into the mirror of history. There were occasions when he differed from the Prime Minister. But that was nothing new. They had differred for almost three decade and yet worked together in the Congress. The differences never embittered their personal relations. Perhaps, both realised that they arose out of their differing backgrounds, beliefs, approaches and attitudes.

It was in 1960 that he announced his intention to retire, and though there were many regrets and many tried to persuade him to continue for a third term, his mind was made up. Jayaprakash Narayan welcomed the decision, suggesting that his direct guidance might be available after retirement to the Sarvodaya Movement. But the 1961 illness, severe and protracted, shattered Rajendra Prasad's health completely. Many, therefore, worried at his decision to go back to the Sadaquat Ashram. How could he guide any constructive movement with that frail body of his ? Would not the inconveniences of the Ashram prove too much for his health ?

His elder sister Bhagwati Devi had passed away in the night of 25 January 1960. She doted on her dearly-loved younger brother, to whose house she had returned within two years of her marriage, a window at nineteen. It must have taken Rajendra Babu all his will power to have taken the Republic Day salute, as usual, on the following day, seemingly unruffled. It was only on return from the parade that he set about the task of cremation.

Within months of his retirement, early in September 1962, passed away his wife Rajbanshi Devi, whose contribution to making him what he was, though indirect, was considerable. Frail and an invalid for a long time, she was the very embodiment of the spirit of renunciation, selflessness, self-effacement and devotion. She had asked for little and though she had been only partly a companion to him, she had silently encouraged him and never stood in the way. Her husband's will was her will, his pleasure hers. Not many words were exchanged between the two—they would sit quietly together for hours—and yet their silent communion filled the atmosphere with a distinct aura.

No wonder, his last days were days of agony. The Chinese aggression had shaken him completely. He had apprehended the danger. He had thought of the dreaded possibility. But "perhaps those who thought otherwise knew better." This consolation was shaken away by the naked aggression. His will to live was

weakening. In a letter to one devoted to him, he wrote a month before his death : "I have a feeling that the end is near, end of the energy to do, end of my very existence." And so, when the end came suddenly on 28 February 1963, he was not unprepared. He died, after a few hourse' illness, with 'Ram Ram' on his lips.

Ever since the present Contributor came never him in 1933, the bond grew stronger as the years passed. Rajendra Prasad had great affection for him and valued his judgment. Rajendra Babu and the present Contributor were together in the Birla House when the Interim Government was formed in September 1946. Rajendra Babu said, "We must now move to our residences." The present Contributor had brought nothing except his clothes, and wondered as to how to go about setting up a home. When he reached No. 3 Queen Victoria Road—now Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road—in the evening, he was pleasantly surprised to find that not only were all provisions and utensils and crockeries there, but even the statue of goddess Lakshmi had not been forgotten.

Rajendra Babu shared Gandhiji's great vision, the making of a new man in a new society. His mind was capable of broad sweeps. But it would take in at the same time the smallest details.

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A SIMPLE, HONEST AND DEDICATED LIFE

VERINDER GROVER*

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's family had a tradition of quenching the thrist for knowledge and doing social service. His father, Munshi Mahadev Sahai, was a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit. More than his father, Rajendra Prasad's mother seems to have influenced his outlook and habits quite profoundly. She was a devout lady and brought him up to cherish the best ideals of ancient culture and traditions. His mother had a great hand in moulding his character and he never failed to seek her advice and guidance. Another person who influenced his life and thought was his elder brother, Mahendra Prasad. Mahendra Prasad realised the unusual potentialities of young Rajendra and encouraged him in every way until he came under the spell of Gandhiji, Rajendra Prasad always consulted his brother and took his advice. However, love of the country and devotion to *dharma* took early roots in his mind.

Political happenings in the country also influenced Rajendra Prasad when he was a student of B.A. At this time Bengal witnessed the rise of political militancy which stirred the conciousness of Rajendra Prasad. He was also carried away by the tide of Indian nationalism and he started taking keen interest in meetings and agitations.

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The tremor which had lasted over three minutes left a trial of misery and suffering. Rajendra Prasad, though not fully recovered and still weak, gathered round him a number of workers and set upon the task of organsing relief measrues for the sufferers. Pandit Nehru said later it was fortunate that a man like Rejendra Prasad was available for the leadership of the relief work in Bihar and it was the faith in him that drew a vast sum of money from all over India.

His remarkable work during the Bihar earthquake was dully recognised when he was made President of the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress in 1935. He had by then been acknowledge as one of the leading leaders of the national struggle. It was under his Presidentship that the Indian National Congress celebrated its Golden Jubilee in December 1935 on a grand scale. Coming in the wake of the revivification and reorganisation of the Congress and of the unstinted testimoney of the people's faith in it during the Central Assembly elections, the occasion called for special observance.

In 1946, when the first interim government was formed, Rajendra Prasad was appointed Minister for Food and Agriculture. It did not take Rajendra Prasad long to size up the food situation in the country. The ultimate solution to the problem, according to him, lay in proper planning of the agricultural economy on the highest priority basis. The main objective of the food policy initiated by Rajendra Prasad was to dependless and less on imports to encourage procurement and in course of time to bring the country to a stage when normal conditions would prevail.

On 11 December, 1946 Rajendra Prased was proposed for the permanent Chairmanship of the Constituent Assembly. Offering his congratulations to him, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said, "This Constituent Assembly has met to frame the constitution, to effect the withdrawal of British control, political, economic and military and establish a free independent India. In Dr. Rajendra Prasad we have one who embodies the spirit of gentleness. He is the soul of goodness, he has great patience and courage. Dr. Prasad is the suffering servant of India, of the Congress, who incarnates the spirit for which the country stands."

India awoke to freedom on the night of 14/15 August 1947, when Dr. Rajendra Prasad addressed the Assumption of Power Meeting for the Constituent Assembly. On that occasion, he said

that India had a great role to play in shaping and moulding the future of a war-distracted world. He added : "The soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance today. We take this pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity."

After the completion of the stupendous task of framing the Constitution under his Presidentship, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was unanimously elected as the first President of the Republic of India on 26 January 1950. Proposing his name for the high office, Pandit Nehru said on the occasion : "Not only have we had experience of our able leadership in these three years of great difficulty but many of us have known you for 33 years or so as a soldier of India, over in the forefront of the battle for freedom. So, we welcome you as our leader, as the Head of the Republic of India, and as a comrade who has faced without flinching all the crises and troubles that have confronted this country during the past generation."

Dr. Rajenedra Prasad's unostentatious, simple dignity, coupled with his experience, scholarship and balanced judgment, easily made him the ideal counsel and guide to the Council of Ministers. The task of national reconstruction received his utmost attention throughout the period of his Presidency.

In conclusion, it may be said that Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a picture of simplicity and gentleness. Behind his charm lay his love of ideas, unselfishness and open-heartedness and long service, all of which no one can miss who met him. In short, Dr. Rajendra Prasad led a simple, honest and dedicated life.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on the Issue of Barahaya Land Dispute and Jawaharlal's Comments on the Topic.

P.O. Ziradei
Dt. Saran, 10th March 37

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have received your two circular letters—one intended for the guidance of members of the Legislative Assembly which I have forwarded to Babu Srikrishna Sinha who has been elected leader of the Assembly Party in my Province and the other dealing with leakage of Working Committee discussions. It is much to be regretted that any thing should go out and it is well that you are going to discuss the matter at the next meeting of the Working Committee.

A situation has recently been developing in my Province which is not free from anxiety for us in the future and I write this to seek your advice. There is a place called Barahaya in the District of Monghyr. It is a pretty big village inhabited mostly by *Bhumihars* who are middle class Zamindars and cultivators and quite well-to do. During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 they were enthusiastically with Congress and many persons courted imprisonment. The government marked it out for special treatment and posted additional police at the cost of villagers who were made to pay anything between Rs. 80,000 and a lakh annually for three consecutive years. We have always looked upon the village as a Congress stronghold and the government was unable to break its spirit in spite of severe repression.

The village has a peculiar geographical position. It is on the Ganges bank and a big area covering several thousand acres gets flooded every year. The *silt* that is left behind makes the land very fertile which gives a good harvest of wheat, barley, etc. The prosperity of the people is very largely due to this. This vast area has very spare population and the residents of Barahaya have big fields. It is said that some of them are oppressive landlords and

have acquired big plots by *squeezing out* the smaller tenants. On the other hand most of these have held the lands for generations and barring some most of their land is ancestral. The Kisan Movement has taken a turn within recent months. All these lands which are in the possession of the landlords are recoded as their *bakasht* lands. It is a technical experesssion in the Tenancy Act and *connotes* land. in actual cultivation of the landlord in which a tenant can acquire occupancy right, if he remains in possession for ten years and under certain other conditions. The practice of landlords in respect of their *bakasht* lands ordinarily is not to allow the same tenant to remain in possession of the same land for the required period and otherwise prevent his acquiring occupancy right, even if they allow tenants to cultivate their *bakasht* lands. In this area also the landlords used to settle some of their *bakasht* lands with tenants for short terms. Dispute arose some months ago between the landlords and tenants, as the latter refused to give farmer their ploughs rights during cultivation season gratis, as was the custom and perhaps also to work in the landlord's fields. The landlords refused to settle their *bakasht* lands with the tenants. The fields were some how cultivated and the harvesting has commenced. It is reported that the tenants in large numbers go to the *bakasht* land of the landlords and cut and take away the crop, although they did not sow the crop at all. This is being done not only against the oppressive landlords but without discrimination. On the side of the tenants it is claimed that they had grown the crop which they are cutting. It is doubtful to what extent the claim is true and can be substantied. The landlords have been approaching us to help them. In the meantime the magistrate has also been approached and has sent police force to prevent loot of the crop and ordered arrests. One prominent Kisan Sabha worker who is also one of our principal workers in the area Sjt. Karyanand Sharma has been arrested and it is reported about 100 tenants have also been arrested. I have asked Babu Srikrishna Sinha, who is resident of the district and fully acquainted with the situation, to visit the place and deal with it. The difficulty that faces us is this. While it may be that in some cases the *bakasht* of the landlords has been acquired by selling out the tenant for arears of rent (we have no objectment for arears of rent in Bihar in the Tenancy Act and the landlord has to sue for arears and sell the holding in execution of his decree like any

other creditor only getting a first charge on the holding if he is the sole landlord)—there are also cases in which what is recorded as *bakasht* has always been in possession of the landlord for generations or has been acquired or purchased by him from another landlord in whose possession it has been for generations. No tenant has ever had any thing to do with it. The loot of the crop is indiscriminate and takes place in the land of any and every landlord whether he is oppressive or otherwise and whether the land was cultivated by the tenants or not. So far as I have been able to know from the talk I had with persons of the locality, the trouble is in an area covering about 20 miles if not more. I have mentioned only the name of Barahaya which is most prominent but there are several other villages involved. *I do not think the Kisan Sabha has instigated the tenants to loot but there is no doubt the situation is largely due to the general awakening among the Kishan and the anti-zamindar feeling which prevails.* I do not think the Kisans are organised enough to *withstand* repression which may follow and they may become demoralised. While Congressmen sympathise with the trouble of the tenants generally speaking and like to help them, they find it difficult to justify and support this loot of crop. I am informed the magistrate was also sympathetic towards the tenants but has changed his attitude after the general looting has commenced. The extent of this loot is not known and it is possible that it is exaggerated but there is no doubt that there is a general widespread movement in the locality which may spread to adjoining parts. It is in this difficult situation which is full of possibilities that I seek your advice and guidance. I am anxious that the awakening among the tenants should not be allowed to die down under the repression which is bound to come and which has commenced. I am equally anxious that the Congress organisation should not be allowed to break down as is likely if we do not intervene and bring about a settlement. A settlement is becoming more and more difficult after the intervention of the police and more and more complications are bound to arise. In law the tenants will have no case, and are not resourceful enough even to fight it out in courts. Sribabu was telling me that if the loot stopped it was possible to arrange the landlords to settle the lands with the tenants as used to be done before, i.e., without occupancy right and perhaps some other concessions. *But there is no one who can speak for the tenants as a body and stop the loot.*

Since then the police have come in and I do not know how things stand at present.

The difficulty and complexity of the situation is the excuse for this long letter which I am writing from my village. I shall be reaching Patna on the 12th and will be expecting a reply.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

APPENDIX II

Rajendra Prasad's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on Agrarian Legislation in Bihar.

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
23.11.37

My dear Jawaharlalji

After you left Calcutta some landlords of Bihar met me there and wanted me to intervene and bring about a settlement of the agrarian question. As you had all left, I spoke to Maulana Azad and we both discussed the matter with them in general way. I requested Maulana to come to Patna and to discuss in detail the pending legislations and other matters connected with the agrarian question. He was good enough to agree to my proposal and came here. We have had prolonged discussions with Congress workers—who are interested in the Kishan Sabha and representative zamindars. As a result of these discussions we have arrived at certain conclusions which we consider to be fair, reasonable and which can be enforced by legislation. I am enclosing a separate note dealing in detail with the provisions of the Bill and with certain other matters which are not covered by the pending Bill, but which will have to be incorporated in one or more bill as may be found necessary. Zamindars have assured us that they would facilitate the passage of the necessary legislation in the Upper Chamber where they have a majority. In some respect our proposals do not go as far as the demands of the Kisan Sabha but we think on the whole they are quite fair and reasonable and should be accepted by the Congress. I shall be able to give you any further information or elucidate our reasons for our proposals on any point that you may require. The zamindars have not yet accepted these but it is possible they may. As I have pointed out

in the accompanying note it will be difficult to give relief in respect of arrears and *Bakasht* lands and the legislation in all matters may be delayed for sometime in the Upper Chamber. With the consent of all parties legislation may be expedited. I shall be obliged if you kindly indicate your views.

My health has been very poor. After my return from Calcutta I have had a somewhat severe relapse and have not been able to go to my village for rest. The Cawnpore work is causing anxiety. I am not relieved and am yet not able to do it. It is going on in my absence. Usually November and December are the worst months for me and I am not at all certain when I shall be fit to go to Cawnpore.

Hoping this finds you all right,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

APPENDIX III

Rajendra Prasad's Note on the Agrarian Problem in Bihar

The Bihar Tenancy Law differs in many respects from that of Agra and Oudh and several of the reforms contemplated by the Faizpur resolution are already part of the law. For example in Bihar a *Raiyat* who cultivates land in a village for twelve years becomes a settled *Raiyat* of that village. Every settled *Raiyat* acquires right of occupancy not only in respect of the land he has so cultivated for twelve years but also in respect of all other land of which he may come into possession as a tenant. An occupancy holding is heritable and now also transferable subject to payment of *Salami* amounting 8 per cent of the consideration money. An occupancy tenant can not be ejected from his holding for non-payment of rent or for any other reason except that he has rendered the land unfit for cultivation. He is entitled to dig wells or tanks in his holding, to erect a house on it, to make bricks for such house or well or tank and to plant trees on it. The only right the landlord has is to get his rent for arrears of which he is entitled to sue the tenant in a civil court and bring the holding to sale in execution of his decree or get his moveables attached or the debter imprisoned just as any other creditor can.

In some places the rent is payable in kind and the system is known as *Bhawali*. *Bhawali* rent is fixed in three ways :

1. Appraisement of the standing crop. The system is known as *Danabandi*.
2. Division of the crop between the landlord and the tenant. The usual proportion is half and half but in some cases the landlord gets 22 *seers* and the tenant gets 18 *seers* in a maund. This system is known as *Batai*.
3. According to a fixed rate per bigha e.g., Rs. 5 in respect

of lands which have been rendered 5 maunds per bigha. This is known as *Mankhap, Manhunda or Chauraha.*

The system of *Danabandi* is unpopular with the tenants on account of arbitrary estimation of the crop.

Under the law as it was amended two years ago tenants have got right not only to plant trees but also to cut them. They are also entitled to the fruit and the timber of trees standing on their cash rent land unless there is a decision of court or entry in the record of rights to the contrary.

The Bill which is pending at present provides for the following :

(a) Abolition of *Danabandi.*

(b) Commutation of *Bhawali* into *Nakdi* or cash rent at the instance of the tenant.

(c) Reduction of rents in the following ways :

(i) By cancellation of all enhancement in cash rent between the 1st January 1911 and 31st December, 1936. This brings the rent to the level prevailing before 1911.

(ii) By reducing the rent of *Bhawali* land which was commuted during the above period into cash rent. The reduction will be to the extent of the difference between the price of food grains prevailing at present and the average price of ten years prevailing at the time of commutation. This works out at over six annas in a rupee when the commutation took place at the time of highest prices and to about four *annas* in other cases in a rupee.

(iii) By settling fair rent in other cases where it may be considered to be high.

Clauses (i) and (ii) will cover the bulk of the holdings in the Province.

(d) For reduction of remission of rent in respect of lands which have been rendered partially or wholly unfit for cultivation by reason of deposit of sand, submersion under water or any other similar cause.

(e) Exemption of moveables and dwelling houses from sale of

arrears of rent.

(f) Immunity of the tenants from arrest in execution of a decree for arrears of rent.

(g) For sale of only such portion of a tenant's holding in execution of decree for rent as may be considered by court to be of sufficient value to satisfy the decree. Under the existing law the entire holding was liable to be sold, however small the amount of decree and, however, great the values of the holding hereafter. Even that will not be sold at a price lower than that fixed by the court so that the tenant will get full value of the portion sold.

(h) Abolition of damages for non-payment of rent. Under the law the court was entitled to award damages for wilful non-payment of rent upto a maximum of 25 per cent or interest up to 12.5 per cent. The amendment abolishes damages and fixes the rate of interest at six per cent. There is a further provision in the amending Bill to the effect that at the option of the tenant the court may take over his entire holding for a period not exceeding 7 years to the landlord in lieu of the arrears sued for. After the expire of the period so fixed the holding is to be restored to the tenant. Thus, the tenant has the option to choose between losing a portion of his holding for ever and losing the whole of the holding for a period. It is proposed to drop the second alternative as : (i) it is seriously objected to by the landlords, (ii) the tenant will be altogether landless during the period when landlord is in possession, (iii) the landlord or his temporary tenant will have no interest in maintaining the fertility of the soil after their possession will have ceased and is, therefore, expected to get the utmost out of it during the period of his temporary possession without caring for its later effects.

(i) Making realisation of *Abwab* or any thing in excess of legal dues a penal offence punishable with imprisonment for six months or fine of Rupees 500 or both. The Bill makes the offence also cognizable but it is proposed to make it non-cognizable in as much as no offence of a similar nature is made cognizable by any other law and

because it is felt that without giving any relief to the tenants it may serve as a handle in the hands of the police for oppressing landlords by arresting them on the pretext of an offence under the section. It will be noted that these provisions secure substantial reduction in rent, make the law relating to execution of rent decrees favourables to the tenant by exempting him from arrests and his moveables from attachment and the bulk of his holding from sale. It reduces interest on arears and makes realisation of *Abwabs* a penal offence. It also does away with thc unpopular system of appraisement and gives to the tenants the right to get his *Bhawali* rent converted into cash rent.

There are certain matters which the Bill does not touch but about which there has been feeling amongst the Kisans. These are :

1. The provision in the existing law empowering the local government to confer on particular landlord who fulfils certain conditions regarding maintenance of correct accounts and so forth the right to realise arrears of rent in the same way as public demands are recovered by issue of a certificate by a revenue officer instead of following the procedure like an ordinary creditor of obtaining a decree and executing it in a civil court. Under the law as it stands a Zamindar has no other status in regard to arrears of rent than that of an ordinary creditor except that the rent in a first charge on the holding. By the above mentioned special procedure he has only to file before a Deputy Collector a notice of demand which has the force of a decree unless within a specified time the tenant abjects to the demand. This privilege has been conferred only on eight or ten Zamindars in the whole province. There is something to be said in favour of this special procedure. It considerably lowers the cost and is a very much speedier process than a civil suit and makes the landlords accounts and papers liable to inspection at any time by any government official. It is seriously objected to on the

ground that it places special power in the hands of the landlords.

2. There are certain lands which are technically known as *Bakasht* land of landlords. They are supposed to be in possession of the landlords. A tenant can acquire the right of occupancy in *Bakasht* land if settled by the landlord with him. It is said that many landlords do not allow tenants to acquire this right of occupancy in *Bakasht* land by not formally settling them the tenants. The quality of such lands has increased very considerably during the period of depression by the landlords when the holdings of many tenants were put up for sale by landlords and purchased by them in execution of rent decrees. There is a great tension in the Districts of Gaya, Patna and Monghyr on account of *Bakasht* lands. Tenants are claiming possession against landlords in respect of them.
3. Although an amending act was passed only two years ago giving right to tenants to the fruits and timber of trees except where there is an entry in record of rights of decree of court to the contrary, tenants want similar rights even when there is a contrary entry or decree. As regaıds trees on *Bhawali* land the grievance of the tenants is that they are made to pay arbitrarily for fruits by appraisement and have no right to the timber, They claim commutation of rent and right to the timber.
4. The Bill does not deal with the question of remission of rent.
5. The amending Act of 1935 gave to the occupancy *Raiyats* the right to sell part or whole of their holding subject to the payment to the landlord of a transfer free popularly called *Salami* at the rate of eight per cent of the consideration money. Before the amendment occupancy right was not transferable and law had become very much complicated on account of a series of decisions of courts. The landlords used to demand a fee for recognising the transfer and the fee varied in different Zamindaris from a nominal fee of rupees two per transaction to 25 per cent of consideration money. The amendment fixed the fee at 8 per cent. The tenants object to the *Salami.*

The pending Bill did not make any provision dealing with these Legal opinion holds that any legislation enforcing restoration of *Bakasht* lands which are in possession of landlords to tenants or wiping out arrears which have already accrued will be of an expropriatory nature and as such invalid against landlords. It has, therefore, become necessary to have some sort of an agreement with the landlords so that relief in respect of *Bakasht* and *Bakaia* (arrears) may be obtainad. Ths arrangement which has been come to in respect of matters not dealt with by the Bill is as follows :

(a) Certificate procedure to be abolished but the procedure relating to suits and execution to be revised so as to make it less costly and speedier.

(b) Lands which have become *Bakasht* by sale during the period of depression from 1929 onwards to be restored to original tenants on payment in five years of half the amount of the decree for which they were sold. This restoration will not be made if the land has been settled with another tenant who has acquired right in it or if it is in the cultivation of a petty Zamindar, i.e., a Zamindar who will be exempt from paying an agricultural income-tax. This will enable tenants to get back most of the land which has been sold during the period of depression. On a rough calculation the amount which they will have to pay will be much less than the amount originally due on account of rent and will bring to the landlord in effect only a little over one year rent as will appear from the illustration given below :

Let us assume that the rent of a holding is Rs. 25 per year. Ordinarily landlords sue for four years' arrears when the claims will have become barred and, therefore, the suit will be for the recovery of Rupees 100 as principal say Rs. 15 as damages for non-payment. The court fee and the other expenses of suit and execution will be more than Rs. 25 but the Court under the rules can allow roughly about Rs. 25. The sale will, therefore, be in lieu of Rs. 100 plus Rs. 15 plus Rs. 25, i.e., Rs. 140 out of which the landlord has spent out of pocket about Rs. 30. Under the arrangement mentioned above the tenant will be able to get back

the land by paying in five years half of Rs. 140, i.e., Rs. 70 of which the landlord has spent Rs. 30 as stated above. He, thus, gets the land in payment in five years of only Rs. 40 which is Rs. 10 less than two years rents and no interest at all. It may also be noted that it takes nearly two years from the institution of a suit to delivery of possession after confirmation of sale in execution. During this period of two years the tenants will have been in possession and probably without paying any rent. He thus gets back his land on paying less than two years rent when he has enjoyed the land without paying rent for six years. It is hoped that this will remove much of the present tension as a great deal of land from which tenants have been dispossessed during the period of depression will have been restored to them.

Lands in respect of which other tenants have acquired rights or which are in cultivating possession of petty landlords are not restored as both these classes are more or less in the same position as a tenant who has been sold out and restoration will amount only to dispossesion of another person in a similar position :

3. Tenants under the proposed arrangement are given right to fruits of trees and bamboos on all cash rent lands irrespective of entries in record of rights or decrees of court. They are also given the right to have *Bhawali* rent of trees commutted into cash rent. The right to timber will remain as under the amending Act of 1935, i.e., in the tenants except where there is a recorded decree to the country in cash rent land and half in *Bhawali* land.
4. Arrears of rent will be remitted in the same proportion as the reduction allowed under the pending Bill. This will work out at four to six *annas* in a rupee in a large majority of cases. Where there is no reduction, arrears of rent may be dealt with by a Board which will be set up for conciliation and settlement of debts more or less in the same way as other debts. Ordinarily conciliation boards have no right to reduce the principal of a debt and are entitled to reduce only the interest on it. In this case it is proposed to give them the power to reduce the principal amount of rent due.
5. It is proposed to abolish *Salami* altogether and to give to the tenants full right of sale. In case of sale of entire

holding the landlord will have to be paid a nominal fee of two per cent of the rent of the holding as is allowed in the case of transfer of tenures and holdings at fixed rates. In the case of the sale of part of the holding there will be no *Salami* chargeable for the sale and the transferee will be entitled to get his name registered jointly with that of the transferer without any fee. But if the transferee wants to have his name separately recorded in respect of the portion sold to him and to have the rent distributed between the portion remaining with the original tenant and the portion sold to him he will have to pay a fee of four per cent of the consideration money to the landlord.

It is hoped that the amending Bill now pending and the other matters mentioned above which will have to be incorporated in another Bill will substantially improve the position of the Kisans in the Province. If the necessary legislation can be put through quickly the relief may be almost immediate. In this Province the Congress has a majority in the Assembly which is large enough to constitute a majority even in a joint session of the Assembly and the Council. But it has no majority in the Council which is dominated by the landlords. Any thing not agreed upon can be delayed considerably by the Upper Chamber. Certain relief which is necessary may not be available at all without agreement, Considering all these things we have felt that the provisions mentioned above should be accepted as reasonably sufficient. It is expected that they will remove the most pressing grievances and give considerable relief to the tenantry. We have, therefore, suggested to the ministry to accept these proposals of ours and to enact legislation to enforce them. We have reasons to believe that the landlords will facilitate the passage of the necessary legislation which may become law within the next few weeks and come into force immediately thereafter.

Appendix IV

Rajendra Prasad's Letter to M.A. Ansari on the Subject of Council Programme

P.O. Zeradei,
Dist. Saran,
26th December 1934

My Dear Dr. Ansari,

I have been thinking about the Council Programme and desire to give my views for the consideration of the Parliamentary Board and the members of the Assembly.

I am one of those who believe that a party engaged in a mass revolutionary movement should not accept positions of honour, responsibility and profit until it has succeeded in capturing power. The reasons are that such acceptance creates personal jealousies among the members, raises hopes among the masses which the party is not able to fulfil and thus a reaction against it sets in. This has been the experience of workers in other countries which has been confirmed by the very limited experience we have gained in this country in the course of our struggle when we have captured Municipal and District Boards and also partly when we have simply entered Legislatures. In spite of this conviction out of deference to friends and co-workers we have not only acquiesced in but have given whole hearted and full-throated support to the Council Programme and the following suggestions are intended to meet as far as possible the basic objection. I assume that the Parliamentary programme is going to be a more or less permanent feature of the Congress programme and may even have to be extended in scope and extent.

We have just emerged successfully out of an election campaign. If we analyse the causes which have helped in achieving this success, I think it will be conceded that it is not so much due

to our clear-cut programme or to the eloquence with which it has been placed before the voters or to the strength of our widespread organisation or to the personal merits of the candidates—although I do not deny that these, too, have had their influence at particular places or in case of particular individuals—but to the faith and confidence among the people at large in the Congress created by the sacrifices and service of hundreds of thousands of men and women, young and old, all over the country. We cannot afford to neglect or to treat with indifference thousands of workers who during the Civil Disobedience Movement suffered and ruined themselves physically and economically but came forward to organise the election campaign, when the call came from the Congress. I believe that the best course to avoid jealousies is to harmonise by equalisation, as far as possible, the position of the Legislators with that of the ordinary workers. It is not suggested that an absolute equality is possible—but it should be made clear that positions in the Assembly and the Council are sought for service and sacrifice and people going there are as much under discipline as the humblest worker in the Congress ranks. Service, sacrifice and discipline are and ought to be our watchword whether we are engaged in sweeping and cleaning a Harijan village or are seated on a ministerial *gadi* exercising what may appear to be intensive powers. In other words, our legislators ought to be volunteers. From this it follows, that the Parliamentary Board, or if necessary the Working Committee, should undertake to support and maintain them, if necessary, during the period of legislative session and at other times when they are engaged in active work. In doing so, it will of course have regard to the position that has to be maintained by a person of that status consistently with the Congress ideal, and efficiency will in all cases have to be guarded. The members themselves will have no claim to any allowances and emoluments which they may get and all such income will come to the Board. Members used to a higher standard of living that provided by the Board will have freedom to supplement the provision made for them along with other members at their own cost, or to have their own independent arrangements, if they so desire, at their own cost. It will have the effect of creating a spirit (of co-operation) among the members themselves and establish a kind of kinship with the humble workers which will be helpful in our work. For the Assembly we have had to contest only about

50 seats or so. We may soon have to contest ten or fifteen times as many more. I visualise to myself and ask the Board and the members of the Assembly to visualise the future after the new constitution is introduced inspite of our refusal and rejection. All kinds of personal, caste and communal jealousies will arise and the only way to deaden the sharp edges of that jealousy is to bring the Legislators to the level of the ordinary worker so that the country at large and the workers, may feel and see that after all it is only a division of labour that has been effected, some having been detailed to village work and others to legislative work according to the exigencies of situation and that places are interchangeable. There is a nation current among some people--perhaps created by our opponents, but sure to be further strengthened by malicious propaganda against us in the future, that membership of District Boards and much so of legislatures is not only a position of honour but also of pecuniary profit. I apprehend that for local Councils we may have to face not only the false propaganda of our opponents but a certain amount of envious mistrust amongst some genuine, but many more spurious, Congress-men also. I am, therefore, anxious that the Legislative Assembly which has our picked men and where we have only some fifty members or so should set the pace and the example for provincial Councillors to follow when the time comes. The Working Committee has passed a resolution asking the Congress members to wear Khadi and thus establish a link between them and the villages. I trust the Board will further strengthen this link by taking away the apparent pecuniary advantage from them. Such a step is not without precedent in India. We know that the members of the Servants of India Society make no pecuniary profit from any position they may hold. Their allowances and salaries attaching to any post they may hold go to the Society which makes suitable arrangements for them. Possibly we have a lower standard of living having to deal not only with a few individuals of high attainments but with thousands upon thousands of all classes and calibres; but whatever standard the Board fixed, it will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements to conform to that standard, and the principle should be recognised that the allowances and emoluments belong to the Board and not to the individual member. Amongst individuals who have set apart their earnings in office we have the examples of the late President

Vithalbhai Patel and Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh. If there is any saving we shall have a nucleus for a party fund as a by-product. I think some such thing is necessary if we have to prevent not from setting in and keep at a high level the enthusiasm of our workers and the masses. An announcement to this effect after the first meeting of the members on the 17th January will go a great way towards maintaining as high pitch attained during the last elections.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
Rajendra Prasad

APPENDIX V

Presidential Speech by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the 48th Session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay (26th October 1934)

We are meeting after three years and a half of strenuous work and suffering. The country has had the misfortune of losing the guidance and mature judgment of a veteran worker like Annie Besant, whose life and work have been a source of inspiration to thousands. It has further had the misfortune of losing another veteran patriot in Sri Sankaran Nair and a valiant nationalist is Mr. Syed Hasan Imam who, 16 years ago, guided the deliberations of a special session of the Congress in this very city. The passing away of that uncompromising champion of our liberties, whether in or out of the Speaker's chair, Vithalbhai Patel leaves a gap which will be well nigh impossible to fill. To many of us, the premature death of Deshpriya Jatindramohan Sen Gupta was a personal calamity. In Mr. A. Rangaswamy Iyenger the country has lost not only a distinguish journalist by also a constitutional lawyer, whose knowledge was frequently requisitioned.

Let me also remind you of the one who is behind prison bars and who represents more than anyone else the flower of the youth of our country and whose ardent spirit is undaunted by national setbacks or domestic anxieties. To Jawaharlal Nehru our heartiest greetings and sympathy, Our thought also must go to the sturdy fighter Subhas Chandra Bose, now in a foreign land. Nor may we forget all those who, though unknown, have suffered or are still suffering for the sake of the country.

To those servants of the nation, known and unknown, who have passed away, we offer our homage.

You have called me to preside over the Congress at a very difficult and critical time. It will be natural on your part to expect me to carry on the national work till the next session of the

Congress. I confess, I feel overwhelmed by the tremendous responsibility that the position carries with it. I would have been happy to be left alone to work in my own humble way in my corner of the country but the nation's call may not be disobeyed. I am here at your service. I am fully conscious of my limitations and have sense enough to know that this signal mark of confidence is not meant as a personal tribute, but is only a token of appreciation of the little contribution that my poor Province has been able to make during the recent struggle and of the sympathy which it has been its good fortune to receive in such ample measure in its recent unprecedented calamity. It rests, however, with you to help me by your unstinsted support and co-operation to carry on the difficult duties you have entrusted to me.

Coming as I do from a Province which, during the last ten months or so, has been particularly seleted as the victim of Nature's wrath, I desire to convey my heartfelt thanks to the country which has shown practical sympathy with the people stricken by a phenomenal earthquake followed by huge floods. The response which has come from all quarters and from all classes of people inhabiting this vast country abroad and from foreigners shows conclusively that if the disaster was unprecedented in its maganitude, the sympathy and fellow-feeling it evoked was equally unparalleled. There have been disasters in the past which, though not so vast in extent, were still some of the greatest recorded in history, and yet the country was never before roused to such a pitch of active sympathy. As the national feeling has grown and pervaded the country at large, the wail of people in a corner of Northern India has resounded and re-echoed from one end to the other and drawn out not only cash but tears and personal service. As the Bihar Central Relief Committee said in one of its early statements : "Out of the great tragedy that has overwhelmed Bihar and taken its heavy toll of death and destruction and sorrow, some enduring good has come in the shape of a united nation joined together in common sorrow and common effort to overcome it, having faith in each other and forgetting the petty differences that seemed too trivial in the face of a mighty disaster."

Recent History

The Congress movement has passed through various phases during the last fifty year of its existence. One would feel tempted

to take a bird's-eye view of its hope and aspirations, its weaknesses and failures, its successes and triumphs. But I would resist that temptation except in so far as its recent history may be necessary to elucidate the present and enable us to lay out a programme for the future.

It will be recalled that the last regular session of the Congress was held at Karachi in March 1931, soon after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It was much to be hoped that the Pact would open a way to permanent peace between Britain and India, but that was not to be. Now that Civil Disobedience has been suspended, it would be useless to go into a detailed examination of the circumstances which forced the hands of the Congress to re-start Civil Disobedience after Mahatma Gandhi's return from the Second Round Table Conference. I would content myself by stating that at every step the object of the Pact was frustrated by the officials who were in charge of affairs and had to give effect to its provisions. Lord Irwin had retired. Lord Willingnon had come in and there was undisguised resentment in official circles at what was regarded as a surrender on the part of Lord Irwin. And the moment he was away from the scene, a complete change in the Government policy came about and preparations were set afoot to take the Congress by surprise as soon as the Round Table Conference was over. It was known that the Government could not afford, and did not intend, to accept the demands of the Congress. Events in England also proved favourable to this scheme of things. The Labour Government had resigned. A National Government with a big Conservative majority was formed and the whole policy of Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Ben was reversed. When Mahatma Gandhi returned from England, he found himself faced with a situation which seemed to have been very carefully and meticulously prepared. An excuse was found in what was wrongly described and advertised as a No-Rent Campaign in the United Provinces, but which was really nothing more than suspension of payment pending negotiations which had been going on between the Government on the one side and the Congress leaders on the other, to secure a settlement on an equitable basis on the very serious question of remission or suspension of rent on purely economic grounds, which had become necessary on account of unprecedented economic depression. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Sherwani and Mr. Tandon were arrested just two days before

Mahatma Gandhi's arrival and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan with some of his colleagues was made a prisoner under an old Regulation. Bengal had already been selected for special treatment and a number of most drastic Ordinances had been promulgated. They were followed by equally drastic Ordinances for the United Provinces and the Frontier. On his voyage, Mahatma Gandhi had been issuing statements offering co-operation, but on landing he came to know of the removal, by arrest and imprisonment, of valued colleagues and the promulgation of the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier, yet he offered, on behalf of the Working Committee, to intervene and, if possible, to bring about a settlement and applied to the Viceroy for an interview, which was unceremoniously rejected except under the condition that the questions relating to Bengal, the U.P. and the Frontier would not be subjects of discussion. The interview having been rejected, Mahatma Gandhi had no option but to advise the Working Committee to be prepared for the revival of Civil Disobedience. But he made a last-moment attempt and sent a second long telegram begging again for an unconditional interview, failing which, he thought it his duty to inform the Viceroy that the Working Committee would have to resort to Civil Disobedience. Reply came to this last-moment request in the form of warrants of arrest for himself, the Congress President, Sardar Vallabbhai Patel, and other prominent Congressmen throughout the country.

The Congress was taken unawares and Government expected that they would be able to crush the whole movement within a fortnight. In spite of want of preparation, in spite of sudden removal of all the prominent Congress workers throughout the country within a few days to prison, when they were not able to give instructions to their followers as to how to organise the campaign, it must be said to the credit of the nation that the lead, which had been given by the Working Committee, was faithfully and spontaneously followed. Thousands again courted imprisonment, lathi charge, firings, heavy fines, confiscation of property, and beatings on an extensive scale.

The movement was not crushed and went on for months and months without break to the bewilderment of officials, who had hoped to crush it in a few days. Special sessions of the Congress were held at Delhi and at Calcutta amidst arrest and lathi charges and in spite of the vigilance of the police who had concentrated

upon preventing them. It is not necessary to go into details of this represeion beyond stating that a bare summary of the provisions of the various Ordinances, most of which were later converted into Acts by obliging legislatures, will show how drastic they were in character and comprehensive in scope. The courts were ousted from jurisdiction and the executive armed with large powers. The Press was muzzled. New offences were created and in some cases collective and vicarious punishments laid down. To these must be added numerous laws enacted for Bengal particularly, apparently to meet what is described as the terrorist menace, but resulting, not in a few cases, in a complete suspension of all political activities of a progressive type, lest their sponsors should incur the wrath and the penalty of the all-powerful C.I.D. Now the Congress has never concealed its view regarding the terrorist movement. It has condemned without hesitation and in an unequivocal language all terrorist outrages, and under the great influence of Mahatma Gandhi has done all it could to create an atmosphere against the cult of terrorism. But at every step it has felt hampered by the fact that impatient enthusiasts who take to this wrong method cannot effectively be approached by public opinion on account of the stiffness of the Government attitude and its all-pervading suspicion of the motives of even those who are its supporters and helpers in this respect. Apart from other considerations, the Congress condemns terrorism because it hampers the country's freedom struggle and tends to create forces which will lead to further disruption and trouble and because it is essentially wrong and un-Indian. But these youngmen cannot be weaned from it by the equally indefensible method of unadulterated repression.

The country has been passing through a period of deep economic depression which has been intensified by the Government policy of managing Indian affairs in the interests not of India but of Great Britain. The past few years have seen great distress of the peasantry, unable to pay the heavy land revenue and rent and suffering great privations. They have witnessed curtailment of expenditure on nation-building departments, great slump in industry, export of more than 200 crores of distress gold, dislocation of trade and a tremendous increase in unemployment, the extent of which, even in the best of normal years, the British Government have never dared to ascertain owing to its vastness.

These years have been remarkable for heavy additions of the already overtaxed tax-payer and the poverty-striken population for carrying on an extravagant and top-heavy administration and partly for suppressing and crushing the movement for freedom.

The Ottawa Pact, which has been condemned with one voice by the best-informed opinion in the country as being detrimental to the best interest of India, and particularly of the masses of agriculturists, was ratified and its working has proved that the apprehensions of its critics were well-founded. It has successfully tied India to the chariot wheels of the British policy of Imperial preference.

Indians Abroad

The position of our countrymen abroad gives no ground for satisfaction. Their treatment in the colonies of the British Empire has been a long-standing cause of just grievance and has influenced not a little the change in our outlook and opinion in favour of complete independence. One after another, Indians settled in these colonies and protectorates are being deprived of their inherent rights to which they are entitled by virtue of their long association, service and contribution to the prosperity of these colonies. They have, in fact, been instrumental in many cases in building up these colonies and many have been born in them and have their homes without any other in the world. One scheme after another is is devised to get rid of them after they are no more needed, and although it is some consolation to know that the scheme of assisted repatriation has been given up, it is also to be noted that no place is found on the vast British Empire where they can live and settle with the same full rights to land and citizenship as others have in India. The latest application of this policy of squeezing out Indians is reported from Zanzibar where, in spite of the best of relations which Indians have maintained for generations with the Sultan and his subjects, Ordinances have been hurriedly passed, which deprive them of the rights of acquiring land. The discrimination against Indians becomes flagrant when we know that this restriction does not extend to the new arrivals from Arabia. There is nothing surprising in all this when we know that Indians do not enjoy even elementary rights of citizenship in their own country and which even the proposed constitutional reforms are not going to confer on them. We can only give this

assurance to our countrymen abroad that as our position at home improves; their position will also automatically improve. In this connection it is impossible not to mention with gratitude the great name of Deenabandhu C.F. Andrews, who has been frequently going to Africa to render such help as has been possible for him to render.

The Dual Policy

The Government policy, which was enunciated by Lord Irwin towards the end of 1929, announcing of the Round Table Conference has always hand a double aspect which has been emphasised more than once by Lord Willingdon's Government. It has been claimed by the Government that this double policy, on the one hand aims at advancing constitutional reforms, and on other seeks to suppress what the Government considers to be subversive and revolutionary movements. In pursuance of the first it is claimed that the Round Table Conference has been framed as a result of consultation with Indians and that a Joint Parliamentary Committee is considering them. These proposals are known as the White Paper. In pursuance of the second, the Government has thought it necessary to suppress the Civil Disobedience movement with a heavy hand. To Indians it seems that the second policy has not only been much more in evidence and has caused untold suffering to numberless people, but is responsible for the issuing of Ordinances and the enactment of laws which have taken away even the ordinary rights of citizenship and laid down drastic penalties and suppressed not only what may be regarded as subversive movements, but effectively prevented perfectly constitutional agitation also. The reforms side of the policy has succeeded only in feeding credulous people on hopes of something which may not come. We have, undoubtedly, had three Round Table Conferences, Committees and Sub-Committees *ad infinitum*, and prolonged inquiry by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. It has dragged on in some form or other its interminable investigations for six or seven long years. It is yet to be seen if this long labour is going to produce anything acceptable even to the most moderate opinion in the country.

The White Paper—Four Tests

The White Paper has been condemned by almost unanimous

public opinion in India as highly disappointing and unsatisfactory. And, of course, it does not in any way fulfil the requirements of the Congress which has declared for independence, meaning and including complete control over the Army, the Finances, the foreign relations and the internal administration of the country. The White Paper is nothing if it is not a negation of all these items and if it does not bar even a gradual progress towards any of them. In view of the fact that very serious efforts are being made in England to whittle down even the White Paper proposals and that even Mr. Arthur Henderson, the leader of the Labour Party, is unable to concede anything in the nature of even diluted self-determination to India, it may seem out of place for me to devote any time to its detailed criticism. But inasmuch as the White Paper proposals are the result of long and extensive consulations and are undergoing detailed examination by the Joint Parliamentary Committee and has been put forward in justification of the Government policy of advancing constitutional reforms, I take leave to point out that the proposals of the White Paper do not take us anywhere near what our moderate countrymen aim at, viz., Dominion Status, not to speak of complete independence which is the Congress goal. In fact, they take the country, in some respects, in the opposite direction and leave it in a position constitutionally worse than that now occupied under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

I will judge the White Paper proposals in the light of four tests, namely : (1) how far the proposed new legislature will be representative of the nation; (2) how far the powers alleged to be transferred to popular control are real in the Centre and the Provinces; (3) what the powers proposed to be transferred in regard to the finances are, and what additional burdens India will have to bear; and (4) whether the new Constitution contains within itself any elements of growth and development.

Composition of Federal Legislature

It is sought to replace the bloc of officials and non-officials nominated by the Government by nominees of Indian States joining the Federation. The nominated officials and non-officials of British India cannot be said to be amenable to popular opinion but they have certainly a wider outlook and have more contact with public opinion than any nominee of the State could be. They

also feel a sense of responsibility, even though it is to the British Government, and nct to the people of India. Will the States have been in a way kept segregated? The only effect of the replacement of the nominated bloc by States' nominees will be a tightening of the British control coupled with traditions of more autocratic rule and greater disregard of popular wishes than we are accustomed to in British India and which these nominees will bring with themselves. But apart from its bearing the character of a nominated bloc, it will also be a larger block numerically. Under the Montagu Reforms, out of 145 members of the Assembly, 40, or 27.5 per cent, are nominated if we exclude the member for Berar who, for practical purposes. is an elected member. Under the White Paper proposals, out of a House of 375, no less than 125, or 33.3 per cent, are nominated by the States—an increase in the nominated element of 6 per cent. When we look at the composition of the elected element in the Federal Assembly, we find that separate electorates have not only been retained but considerably extended and the number of those generally expected to side with the British and the Governor-General considerably increased. I believe, in the place of 41 out of 104, or 39 per cent, being returned by separate electorates under the existing Constitution, we shall have 108 out of 250, or 43 per cent, returned by separate electorates under the White Paper scheme. Thus, there can be hardly any doubt that the White Paper Federal Assembly will be a less progressive and more autocratically inclined body than the present Assembly. It is necessary to go into the constitution of the Second Chamber which is bound to be less progressive than the popular House. In a joint session which is provided for, the nominated element will be 235 out of 636, or 37 per cent, and a motion of no-confidence in connection with a subject relating to British India against a British Indian Minister can never secure a two-thirds majority if the States' nominees choose to maintain the Ministry.

In the Provinces the nominated bloc is done away with, but several Provinces like Bengal; Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces are going to be saddled in its place with a Second Chamber, and if the trend of opinion, as it is developing in England, gives any indication, other Provinces are probably going to follow suit under the advice of the joint Parliamentary Committee. Whatever justification there may be for a Second

Chamber in the Federal Legislature like that of the Provinces, there is no justification for the extra expenditure involved in setting up and maintaining these Second Chambers. Nor does the experience of the working of the Montford Reforms lend any support in their favour even in the Provinces which may be said to be radical or very progressive.

Powers Claimed to be Transferred

Now, no Constitution can be said to confer Self-Government or Responsible Government or Domininion Status, much less complete independence, which reserves to the Governor-General, and refuses to transfer to ministers under the control of a popular legislature, the admiministration of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Ecclesiastical Departments. But leaving this alone, which the White Paper frankly reserves, let us consider the Departments it professes to transfer. In regard to these also, it is clearly laid down that the Governor-General will not be guided by the advice ministers, if so to be guided would infringe on what are called the Reserve Departments, his special responsibilities, and, I may add, also his discretionary powers. These are couched in such general terms that there is hardly any measure which the Governor-General could not hold up or prevent, if he considered it necessary to do so, in his wisdom, which will be the final arbiter in the matter. These special responsibilities are to vague and widespread that they may be said to pervade all departments.

It is not inconceivable that the most innocent action taken by a minister not in favour with the Governor-General or the Governor—and in this respect the powers of both are identical for all practical for all practical purposes within their respective spheres—could easily be regarded as infringing upon his special responsibility in respect of one or other of the seven heads into which it is divided. The much advertised autonomy of the Provinces really gives more autonomy to the Governor than to the people or the minister and enabls the Governor-General to have his orders executed in spite of the ministers, even when they may happen to deal with a matter falling within the scope of the latter if only the Governor or the Governor-General decided that it infringes on the special responsibility of the one or the other.

Special responsibilities are laid down under seven heads for the Governor-General. They are : (1) the prevention of grave menace to the peace or tranquility of India or any part thereof;

(2) the safeguarding of the financial responsibility and credit of the Federation; (3) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities; (4) the securing to the members of the Public Services of any right provided for them by the Constitution Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate rights; (5) the prevention of commercial discrimination; (6) the protection of the rights of Indian States; and (7) any matter which affect the administration of any department under the direction and control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General being empowered in each case to determine whether any special responsibility is involved in any given circumstance. The same powers are given *mutatis mutandis* to the Governor in so far as they are applicable to the Provinces. The first practically takes away with one hand what it purports to give with the other; law and order though said to be transferred to the Province are thus kept quite safe within the double lock of special responsibility of the Governor-General and the Governor. The elasticity of this phrase is quite well-known in this country and I am using no language of exaggeration if I say that it is mere camouflage and a fraud to say that law and order is being transferred when the special responsibility in this respect is reserved in the wide and all pervasive terms as is done under the White Paper proposal.

As regards the second, admittedly, the definition of this responsibility is drawn in wide terms and enables the Governor-General to step in whenever any proposal of the Minister regarding budgeting or borrowing is considered by him as prejudicing or endangering India's credit in the money market of the world. Past experience has shown that financial stability and credit of India are synonymous with British profit at the expense of India, and British interests have been served so often and so brazen-facedly in the name of India's stability and credit that no Indian is likely to be deceived by words which cannote more than their ordinary dictionary meaning. The entire currency and exchange policy of the Government is said to be dictated by these considerations and we know it to our cost bow a stroke of the pen or an apparently innocent notification of the Government has the effect of transferring crores from the hands of Indians to those of the British without the former realising it.

The third will, of course, come very handy in turning many an awkward corner. Our Muslim brethern and others who are in a

minority are apt to run away with the idea that the British Government is reserving special responsibility to safeguard their interests. Really speaking, if there is anything more calculated than another to keep all the communities warring with each other, it is this. Besides, it is a delusion to think that the safeguards are devised to serve any of the Indian minorities. They will find in actual working that after all, in all matters of moment, it is not they who are meant but the small miscroscopic minority of those birds of passage who come from thousands of miles and make hay while the sun shines and then disappear in the evening of their days to enjoy the fruits in their native land again.

The fourth destroyed whatever is yet left of autonomy. We shall indeed be masters in our own house without having the power to order our servants about, to whom we shall be bound to pay their unbearably high salaries, guarantee their pensions and leaves and promotion, and what not. It will be easy enough for these so-called Civil Servants to set at naught not only the policy, decisions and orders of their so-called superiors, the ministers, but to create deadlocks which will be set down to the discredit of Indians who will be branded as incompetent and inexperienced ministers to whom it was a mistake, it will be said, to transfer powers.

In the name of preventing commercial discrimination against the British, it is really ensured that the Indian should be discriminated against in the future as he has been in the past. It must be the experience of all businessmen who have anything to do with the Government, and they cannot move an inch without coming across the Government in some form or another, how at every step they have to face situations which a Britisher there has not to face. Go to the coal-fields. They will tell you how difficult it is for an Indian colliery-owner to get a railway siding to his colliery, how difficult it is for him to get wagons, and how the Indian is everyday discriminated against in practice. I am not mentioning how it has been possible for a few British concerns to get leases of practically the whole area with the best seams of coal and how Indian have to be content with second and third class collieries, and even these they get with difficulty. I am not forgetting that colliery lands are largely owned by Indians. We know how these are managed, specially when the owner happens to be a

ward of court. The manipulation of railway frieghts offers an easy handle. When I was looking after the affairs of the All India Spinners' Association in my Province, I calculated some years ago that the cost of transport of cotton from Sewan in the district of Saran, where cotton is largely grown, to Madhubani in the district of Darbhanga where we produce our best and the largest quantity of Khadi, both the districts begin within the same division of Tirhut under a Commissioner, was the same as that of transporting cotton from Bombay to Japan an bringing back the cloth made of that cotton to Bombay. I do not know if there has been a change in this respect recently. Similarly, I was told that the cost of transporting coal from South Africa to Indian cotton mills was the same as that of transporting it from the coalfields of Bihar to the same mills. I am mentioning these few illustrations, and they can be multiplied to show how in the past the whole policy of the Government of India has been ragulated with an eye not to the benefit of Indians but of foreigners, and if by any chance any minister has the temerity to try to be just, he will at once be held up as discriminating against the Britisher, and the Governor-General or the Governor will have no difficulty in invoking his special responsibility for perpetuating the injustice.

As regards the Indian States, we have already had illustrations how activities of their subjects in favour of constitutional reforms can be throttled and the special responsibility of the Governor-General or the Governor in this respect will be used for preventing the virus of democracy from spreading into these States.

So much for special responsibilities. The discriminatory powers of the Governor-General and the Governors are of a most drastic kind. Under the existing Constitution, the Governor has the power of certification and veto but, under the proposal embodied in the White Paper, he can also send message to the legislature not to proceed with a certain measure of legislation, as also to pass certain others, or that a particular measure must be passed by a particular date and in the event of the legislature refusing or failing to obey his command, it will become a Governor-General's or Governor's Act which will have the force of an Act of legislature without having the odium attached to the name of "Ordinance" and without the letters of a limited duration, which an Ordinance has. These proposals place India under

a virtual dictatorship. Mr. Churchill described the position admirably in another context :

> The Viceroy or Governor-General was armed with all the powers of a Hitler or a Mussolini. By a stroke of pen, he could scatter the Constitution and decree and law to be passed or martial law, which was no law at all. Of all these he was the sole judge. Such a functionary was a dictator and he had a very powerful army.

All this power is given not only to the Governor-General but even to Provincial Governors who are, for the first time, to be invested with powers to pass Ordinances and Governors' Acts and all other powers within their spheres which the Governor-General possesses in respect of the country as a whole.

The White Paper proposals further take away certain powers which are now possessed by the Assembly, in however attenuated a form they may be. Thus, a discussion of the Railway Budget used to furnish an opportunity for the ventilation of grievances in connection with railway administration. Railways could now be discussed and voted upon by the Central Legislature, but the creation of the proposed statutory railway authority would have the effect of precluding the future Government and Legislature from making any effective criticism of any matter transferred to the statutory authority. That this is not a negligible matter is apparent from the fact that the Railways have some Rs. 800 crores invested in them and are very largely national concern already and where they are not so, they are soon passing into the hands of the States.

Finance

When we come to consider the question of finance, the illusory nature of the so-called reforms becomes still more apparent. It has been calculated that 80 per cent of the Central revenue in the Central Government will be eaten up by Army expenditure, debt service, guaranteed pay, pensions and allowances, which will be outside the vote of the assembly, and the remaining 20 per cent with which alone the minister, supposed to be responsible to the Legislature, could play, would be subject to a vote of the Upper Chamber which could bring it before a joint session of both Chambers for

final determination. Further, if the Governor-General regards the demands for grants by the minister under any head inadequate for the discharge of his special responsibility, he may include any additional amount when he regards necessary for the discharge of such special responsibility, and the legislatare will not be at liberty to vote on the same. Thus, it is apparent that the control of the ministry over the public purse is practically nil in the Centre.

Considering the proposals from the point of view of the burden they impose on the country, it has been said on high authority that the introduction of Provincial Autonomy will involve an annual expenditure of Rs. 6½ to 8 crores and that of responsibility in the Centre another Rs. 2 crores every year. In a country which is admittedly the poorest in the world, where the cost of administration is top-heavy and certainly out of all proportion to the per capita income of the population under it, any addition to the already unbearable burden cannot but be regarded with the greatest misgiving, and no responsible person can easily reconcile himself to this additional burden as a price for reforms so illusory, so retrograde, and so calculated to perpetuate and tighten the stranglehold on the country.

Future in the Air

There is no provision for any automatic growth or development in the Constitution. Everything does and will continue to depend on the sweet will and pleasure of the British Parliament. There is no pretence at self-determination and even the Federation, which is to come after fulfilment of so many conditions precedent, can come only after a second vote of the Houses of Parliament.

And what is this Federation ? It is a kind of federation which has no parallel in history. In it the rulers of one-third of India will be called to counteract through their nominees the progressive elected elements of the remaining two-thirds. There is absolutely no mutuality in any respect : the princes' nominees will have equal rights with the elected representatives of British India to interfer with the administration of British India without British Indian representatives having any the least voice in the administration of the States, which will continue their autocratic rule without so much as even declaring or guaranteeing the elementary, fundamental rights of citizenship, which are, or rather ought to be, the basis and foundation of any allegiance which the people may be

required to bear to the State. In other words, it will be a kind of federation in which unabashed autocracy will sit entrenched in one-third of India and step in every now and then to strangle popular will in the remaining two-thirds. But the princes themselves will be more helpless than they are now and will soon realise the effect of a federation which is conceived to keep them free from the baneful interference of British India people, but none the less subservient to the Viceroy.

Suspension of Civil Disobedience : Council Programme

I have thus far discussed the dual policy of the Government. I come now to our own policies and plans. Events have, somehow, so happened that since the breach of the truce in 1932, we have had to steer our course clear of Government policies. The suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement was declared not with reference to any declaration of policy by Government, but with reference to the peculiar moral and spiritual character of our struggle.

I will not go into the events that led up to the historic Patna decision of May 1934—how Gandhiji successfully challenged from jail the Communal Award of the Premier which had threatened to vivisect the Hindu community in twin, how Gandhiji intensified the movement for the abolition of untouchability and his epic fast as part of it, and his release, the Poona Conference, and how as a result of things he had heard and seen during the great Harijan tour he came to recommended to the A.I.C.C. suspension of the Civil Disobedience and confining it to himself. Let the country study the course of events in the statemets Gandhiji had issued from time to time.

Some of the factors, which must have weighed with Gandhiji when he recommended suspension of Civil Disobedience as a mass movement could not have escaped the notice of even casual observers. Two weaknesses seem to me to have dogged our footsteps.

Firstly, the Congress workers had been gradually and perhaps unconsciously led into adoption of methods of secrecy, which reduced what would have been an open battle of defiance into a battle of wits. It was not realised that Satyagraha is essentially a fight on a higher moral plane in which suffering is openly courted and cheerfully borne and which any attempt to overreach him

rebounds with fatal effect on the Satyagrahi himself.

Secondly, it must also be admitted that the attack of the Government on a vulnerable point succeeded People were not prepared to lose property to the extent they were prepared to lose liberty and even life, and when heavy fines and classifications started on a wholesale scale, gradually demoralisation set in and ultimately broke the backbone of the movement. An attempt was made to continue the struggle by confining it to those individuals who had faith in it, taking it out of the methods of secrecy. That partly explains the Poona and Patna decisions.

It has had to be suspended in the very interests of the movement and those of the country. The principal reason was our own weakness, and yet I do not feel that there is any reason to be down-hearted. Our object is nothing less than the liberation of the vast country which is as big as a continent, with its varied population of many castes and creeds and speaking different languages. The response which the country has made from one end to the other to the call of the Congress has been splendid and we have reason to be proud of it. Because our object is great and the task difficult and tremendous, we have to consider our own shortcomings and defects of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee, and certain announcements which Mahatma Gandhi has made have been subjected to very searching criticism. The value and importance of these resolutions and the statements of Mahatmaji consist in the fact that they have brought in the forefront of discussion certain fundamental considerations. The first statement which Mahatmaji issued from Patna on the 7th April last, simultaneously with his correspondence with Dr. Ansari, announced his advice to the Congress and Congressmen to suspend Civil Disobedience except with regard to himself, and to those who believed in entry into legislature, to take up the programme of Council Entry. Both these items were considered at great length at the meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Patna in the following May and were endorsed by it. The Council Entry programme naturally led to the creation of the Congress Parliamentary Board which has been entrusted with the work of organising, guiding, and controlling propaganda in favour of election of Congressmen to the Assembly for the time being. Now, today we are in the midst of a campaign which has led to the formulation of the Congress policy in the legislatures in regard

to the White Paper and the Government policy of ruthless repression on which all parties in it are agreed but also, unfortunately, on what has been called the communal decision of the British Government on which all are not agreed. It will be recalled that after the Second Round Table Conference, the British Government announced its decision settling, from its point of view, the question of communal representations in the legislatures under the reforms constitution. The decision was given because the Indian members of the Round Table Conference were unable to arrive at an agreed settlement of the outstanding differences on the constitutional question amongst the various communities in India. It has created the unfortunate position that whilst we are unable to agree among ourselves, it is also impossible to accept this decision which is anti-national in many respects and is calculated to retard the progress of the country towards a common national outlook. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that some of the minorities, particularly the Musalmans, are opposed to rejecting it or think in the main it safeguards their interests. The Working Committee had, therefore, to decide the question on which a large section of Hindus and Sikhs are on the one side and practically all Musalmans, with a few leading exceptions, and perhaps members of some other minority communities, are on the other, the former favouring the unqualified rejection of the decision and the latter equally strongly favouring its acceptance, until it was replaced by an agreed settlement. Under the circumstances, the Working Committee had no other alternative but to point out the unsatisfactory and anti-national nature of the decision hoping at the same time to be able in course of time to replace it by an agreed settlement, and to that end not to divert the attention of the country by creating an agitation in favour of either accepting or rejecting it.

Mahatmaji's Statement

But events have marched quickly during the past few weeks. Mahatma Gandhi has just made two statements of far-reaching importance, in which he has recorded his reading of the history of the past fifteen years, placed his finger unerringly on the secret places of our heart and given us a warning for the future. Not even his worst critics have challenged his analysis and some have even glossed over the situation in an 'I told you so' spirit. It will be best for us and for our country if, even at the end of these

fifteen years of our struggle, we realise the true situation. The first statement was in the nature of a challenge and a feeler, the second is the result of the country's reaction to the first. In the first he declared the things that he holds dearer than life itself—truth and non-violence and Khadi, reform and revolution through conversion and not compulsion—and said, as one section of the country was running away from these articles of faith and as the other was giving no effect to the allegiance to them which it professed from year to year, there was nothing for him but to retire from the Congress. In the second setatement he declares his conviction that his retirement is inescapable, but as he retires in order to be of more service to the Congress and the country than heretofore, he has also suggested a reform in the constitution which alone can save the Congress from disruption.

Now that leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ansari and the Khan brothers have given their hearty assent to the correctness of Gandhiji's decision, I do not think it necessary for me to take up your time discussing the pros and cons of the question of his retirement. I should certainly have done so if my own mind ran counter to the opinions of these colleagues, but I am steadied as soon as I remind myself that his decision proceeds out of the depth of his devotion to truth and non-violence and it must spur us on to further effort towards those ideals.

But though Mahatmaji has made up his mind not to seek the vote of the Congress on things that make up the warp and woof of his life, I would ask you not to dismiss those things without a thought, and would urge you to realise their implications and to give them some place at least in your programme and your policies. Though I do not claim to have the same living and active faith as Mahatma Gandhi in those things that he has taught some of us at least to hold do not I must declare my creed and my conviction about them.

Congress Creed

About the amendment in the creed. I would ask you only one question. Have we really understood by "peaceful and legitimate" anything but "truthful and non-violent" all these years ? Has the world outside understood our creed differently ? All the credit that we can take today and all the discredit that critics and our self-introspecting hearts pour upon us spiring from

the fact that we have kept that lofty creed as our ideal. The world should cease to watch our fight with interest if our creed meant anything less than it has meant all these years. Whatever failure of our civil resistance to civilise our rulers, there is no gainsaying the fact that there should have been much more unashamed brutality than we have been the victims of, if there had not been this great creed proclaimed by us.

I next come to the yarn franchise and the much discussed khadi clause. I may say without being guilty of national vanity that there is no other flag in the world which expresses in itself purer and loftier ideals. It rules out in one sweep the three-fold curse of modern humanity, viz., imperialism, capitalism and industrialism. The spinning wheel and khadi are not only the living link between the classes and the messes, they are symbols of the country's determination to resist all forms of exploitation by non-violent means. They represent an era of purification of politics and private life. Remove the khadi clause and you will snap the living link between the cities and the villages,

To my mind, Truth, Non-violence, and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi programme and more. There is a section of our countrymen who, without having achieved even what we pledged ourselves to do at Karachi, insist an crying for more. Whilst I would have no objection to amplifying the Karachi programme and elucidating it wherever there may be any fear of misunderstanding. I would say emphatically that we should do nothing that compromises by one iota the creed of non-violence. Whatever may be our failures, we have made rapid strides. Let us not by our impatience undo the work of the last fifteen years. My friends, the Socialists, are keen on a more inspiring ideology and would hasten the elimination of all that stands for exploitation. I should like to tell them in all humility but will all the force at my command that there is no greater ideology than is expressed by the creed of truth and non-violence and the determination of the country not to eliminate the men that stand for exploitation but the forces that do so. Our quarrel is with the sin and not the sinner, which we all are to a greater or lesser degree. Compulsion will react on us with redoubled force; conversion, however slow it may seem, will be the shortest cut and will mean a new contribution to history and civilisation.

Reform of Constitution

Having said this, I would say a word about the reform in the constitution that Mahatmaji has suggested in his second statement. He recommends that the size of the Congress should be considerably curtailed and the representation in the Congress should reflect its hold on the country as a whole. It has been suggested that to make the Congress an efficient deliberative body, the number of delegates should be reduced from 6,000 to 1,000 and each delegate should be regarded as, in fact he is, a representative of the members on the Congress roll, and give to those places and Provinces proportionally larger representation in the Congress, that will have more members on their rolls and that have been more active in carrying out the Congress programme. Whether they, the members, represent the whole nation or not will depend upon the quantity and quality of service they render. The Congress influence and hold over the people have never depended upon the number on the actual register but they depend upon what it stands for—the sacrifice that the members have made for achieving the goal.

In conclusion, I would say that in considering Mahatmaji's statements you should remove from your minds any apprehension that you may have that he is going to retire from public life or that, by not being physically connected with Congress, his interest will cease or that his help will not be available. I have no such apprehension. I am sure his separation is intended to strengthen and help us, and not in any way to weaken or hinder us. I feel that Mahatmaji outside the Congress which does not wholeheartedly accept his programme will be more helpful to the country and the Congress than Mahatma Gandhi inside the Congress with the drag of a big unbelieving majority at his back. I do not, therefore, feel any shock over his impending separation. I do not minimise the effect of such a decision, if he comes to it, but I wish you to have faith in him and I have no doubt that all will be right, whether he decides to work from within or from outside the Congress.

CONCLUSION

Let us start with a clean slate on the work in front of us.

The need of the hour is not for bigger or more inspiring programme, but for the determination to achieve what little we may have set before ourselves. The task is immense. There is today a greater determination on the part of the rulers not to part with power, as they have succeeded in creating disruption in our ranks. The Ordinance rule of the past four years indicates the extent to which the Government can go to suppress the movement for freedom, even though it may be probably non-violent. Bengal and N.W. Frontier have been raped, seemingly beyond repair. It is difficult to breathe free in the one, and it is impossible to understand the situation in the other. There have been deplorable acts of terrorism in Bengal, but unmanning the whole youth of vast areas is not the way to fight it. The N.W. Frontier Province, which has had a severe spell of repression, which the brave Pathans led by that selfless and patriotic servant Abdul Ghaffar Khan have borne with exemplary restraint, is forbidden ground for him and for his brother. There is constructive work enough and to spare, to occupy the time and energies of those who care for it. The resolution on cent per cent Swadeshi that Mahatmaji has embodied in his second statement is a vital one. If the infatuation with high-rounding slogans has not blinded our reasons, we should see that Khadi with cent per cent Swadeshi is enough to take us to our goal of complete independence which, in Mahatmaji's language, "is an impossible dream without the higher classes merging themselves in those millions who are miscalled lower classes".

Council Entry Programme

There is, lastly council programme. The All India Congress Committee has decided to contest elections to the Legislative Assembly, so that the country might pronounce its verdict on the White Paper and the repressive policy of the Government. I hope that the electors will show by unmistakable action that the Congress possesses their full confidence. Let us not, however, be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by anything we could do in the legislatures. We have to remember that the price for freedom must be paid before we can get it and while we have every reason to be proud of what has been done and what the country has suffered, it is after all, yet, inadequate for the great object we have in view. The task we have taken upon ourselves

is great and glorious. It requires inexhaustible patience, unflinching determination and unending sacrifice. Time and world forces are helping us and, above all, God is with us in this great epic struggle of an unarmed people fighting with the weapons of Satyagraha, Truth and Non-violence, a most powerful Government armed *cap-a-pie* and equipped with latest engines of destruction devised by science and human ingenuity. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of independence.

Meaning of Independence

Independence is the natural outcome of all that the freedom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation, particularly when we remember that it has to be achieved by non-violence. It means the end of exploitation of one country by another and of one part of the population of the same country by another part. It contemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for the mutual benefit of all. It forebodes evil to none, not even to those exploiting us, except in so far as they rely upon exploitation rather than goodwill. The sanction behind this independence movement is non-violence which in its positive and dynamic aspect is goodwill of, and for, all. We already see signs of how it has begun appealing, to a certain extent, to world opinion. This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so according as the element of distrust and suspicion, which has its birth in fear, is eliminated and replaced by a sense of security born out of confidence in the goodwill of India. India having no designs on others, will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the goodwill of its inhabitants. Having no designs on others, she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others, and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the goodwill of the world at large. Conceived in this light, our independence ought not to frighten even the British unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions.

The method, too, is crystal clear. It is active, dynamic, non-violent mass action. We may fail once; we may fail twice; but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by the difficulties

which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of the great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed and firm in our determination. Satyagraha, in its active application, may meet the temporary setbacks but it knows no defeat. It is itself a great victory, for as James Lowell put it :

Truth for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.

APPENDIX VI

Presidential address of Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Fifteenth Conference of Registrars of Co-operative Societies at Madras on 12 May 1947.

1. The Co-operative Movement has been with us now for nearly half a century. During this period it has passed through many vicissitudes, but, on the whole, the general expansion cannot be said to have been affected. The movement has been working long enough for us to pause and reflect. On the one hand, we have to look backward and estimate our achievements and failures. On the other hand, we have to look forward and decide the lines along which expansion and progress should be directed.

2. It started with the organisation of co-operative credit societies under the Act of 1904. The kind of societies visualised there was the type that obtains now, namely. the rural society composed of agriculturists with unlimited liability. Rapid growth of the movement made it necessary to remove some of the defects of the previous Act. The result was that the Co-operative Societies Act, 1912, which can be said to be the basis of the present co-operative movement, was passed. Under this Act legal recognition was given to societies organised for purposes other than credit and the distinction of rural and urban societies was abolished. With the passing of this Act the number of co-operative societies increased considerably and new types of societies for the sake of production, purchase of manure, retailing of farm implements, better housing, sanitation, primary education, and so on, came into being. In 1919 co-operation became a provincial subject. Since then in every province emphasis has been laid on the type of co-operation that suited the province. Upto 1929 the movement grew in strength, but on account of the depression which began in that year it received a severe set-back. Accordingly from 1929 up to the beginning of the war, emphasis in the co-operative movement was more on consolidation and rehabilitation rather than on

expansion. It was but natural that on account of the need for reorganisation, official control on the movement increased during this period. When war began the agricultural prices started going up in common with other prices. The co-operative movement received an impetus. The members repaid their debts, deposits with co-operative banks increased. In fact they increased so rapidly that, with the proportionately smaller demand for loans, the banks were faced with the problem of surplus funds. The significant feature of the movement during the war was the growth of consumers' co-operative societies and stores especially for the procurement of foodstuffs. Co-operative marketing also grew. In the post-war period which has just begun, we are now confronted with the problem of fitting the co-operative movement in the general plan for the economic development of the country.

3. In the earlier years, the movement was confined to the provision of rural credit, based on the principle of unlimited liability. The development of co-operation was guided and controlled by the Government; Government control had both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that an experiment in special economics, largely dealing with the poor cultivators, was started with the authority of Government behind it and this helped to sustain the movement in its infancy in spite of failures here and there. We must accept that this foundation has been of immense value in making possible much rapid development in the later years. At the same time, with the development of a co-operative consciousness among the more intelligent public, several leading non-officials interested themselves in the development of co-operation. It would be true to say that, under the conditions of Government then existing, the co-operative movement offered about the only opportunity for the Government and the public to get together for improving the conditions of life of the people. Under the Reforms Act of 1919, co-operation became a provincial transferred subject, and was placed under the charge of a Minister. During this period, there was considerable development. Non-credit co-operation came to increase in importance. Provincial legislation, to suit the special conditions of each province, was introduced, Non-official institutions for propaganda and education were encouraged. Certain provinces appointed committees of enquiry to report on the progress of the movement. It was clear by then that the movement had taken root in the country and both

It fits in with an economy in which the small cultivator is the central figure. As an individual the cultivator is weak and cannot hope to stood up against the gigantic forces that lead to his exploitation. Through co-operation he acquires strength. At the same time the co-operative method affords sufficient freedom to the individual, unlike extreme forms of planned state control in which the individual is perhaps better housed and better fed and clothed, but is drilled into a uniformity that cannot but ultimately stunt his stature as a human being. There is an element of democratic freedom inherent in co-operation and this freedom has to be prized above all things. The freedom of the individual, however, has to be used for the benefit of the community of which he is a part, and it is this healthly compromise between discipline and freedom that is embodied in the co-operative method—"all for each and each for all." One cannot think of a more wholesome philosophy for a country of self-reliant cultivators living in communities small enough for one person to know another, and willing to pool their resources and create social and economic unity and strength. The various organanisations in the co-operative movement have to be conceived and created in this combined spirit of advantage to one's self and benefit to other. Without the background of this ideology, individual institutions will lose much of their significance.

7. In turn, this background of the co-operative-movement point to the importance of looking at cooperation more as a way of life than as a series of separate for specific purposes. The various forms of cooperation are intended to subserve the varying needs of the cultivators, the labourers and the general public. All these various institutions together help the individual to lead a better life. The cultivator should be made to feel that the co-operative movement can help him at all stages. It affords credit for redeeming past debts through land mortgage banks. For this cultivation expenses it extends facilities for securing good seed, manure and implements. It is a healthy sign that these facilities are increasingly being provided in kind rather than in cash. Societies for consolidation of holdings help to arrest the evil of fragmentation. He can improve his land by digging wells or raising bunds by loans of a medium dated character. The cooperative society purchases his produce, stores it and sells it for him, thereby helping him to secure fair prices for his produce

which he has to sell. His daily needs are met by the consumers' society which secures to him which he needs to purchase at fair prices. Cottage industries to occupy the spare time of the cultivator and his family offer a fruitful field for cooperative effort. Thus, the movement contacts the cultivator at every point. This is proper and healthy, and the tendency to bring together as many aspects as possible in one institution which has a "multi-purpose" character is to be welcomed. It is true that the movement originated with credit, and that original sin still sticks to it. Even today the primary credit society is the base of the movement, but it has to be enlarged so as to move one step higher up and provide those facilities for which credit is utilised. The cooperative circle will then start with the provision of seed and manure, and will be completed by the marketing of the produce.

8. That credit should have played and continue to play such an important in the movement is but natural inasmuch as the want of it or the lack of the capacity to command it at rersonable rates is the greatest weakness of the small man. The two Committee have accordingly recommended that the financial structure should be reconstructed so as to provide agricultural producers with an agency of credit alternative to the private money-lender. The village money-lender is and has been the target of much criticism. Whatever his sins may be, it must be admitted that in the absence of credit societies he played a most useful part in supplying credit. His terms may have been exorbitant and his methods not always and in all cases quite honest. But I cannot help saying that I have seen co-operative credit societies charging something like 15 per cent per annum as interest on the loans advanced by them, and that when they had not only the benefit of the unlimited liability of all the members of the society for the default of any member but also of the legal right to claim facilities for quick realisation of their dues. The village money-lender had none of these and if he charged more than 15 per cent interest in some cases for the extra involved, I for one would not be prepared to blame him. Dishonest dealings of those who indulged in them are apart and of course deserve strongest condemnation. One great weakness of the co-operative movement proceeded from what we regarded as its strong point. Co-operative societies could not charge interest at lower rates from their borrowers, when to attract deposits they were themselves paying 7 or 8 per cent to their depositors. The

unlimited liability of their members and the facilities for enforcing their claim created a facile complancency and loans were advanced which did not fall strictly within the objects for which they could be advanced and further hardly any check was exercised on the utilisation of the loan by the debtor who very often used it for non-productive purposes. The natural consequence was strict enforcement of the rules for realisation of the debt, taking over of lands in lieu of the debt not only of that the debtor but in many cases of others who had unwittingly assumed unlimited liability and had been too lazy to see to it that the debtors did not abuse the trust and thus throw their own liability arising out of their impecuniousness on others. When debts could not be realised in spite of this, societies were unable to fulfil their obligations to the co-operative bank, and the latter in their turn closed their doors in several cases and those who had deposited their savings and earnings in the hope of getting interest at a higher rate than was available from other banks lost heavily not only the interest but in some cases also their principal. Efforts were made to stop the rot and provincial Governments came to the rescue of the movement after this period of depression, and but for the events that followed the starting of the World War II the movement in many places would have collapsed. In any scheme of reorganisation the defects and weaknesses should not be lost sight of and should be provided against.

9. The Gadgil Committee have recommended that the alternative agency should be an Agricultural Credit Corporation to which the State should provide a part of the working capital and take responsibility of administration. It is further recommended that each State or Province should prepare separately a scheme for such a Corporation for themselves. The Saraiya Committee however feel that much time may be lost in preparing such a scheme and recommend that the existing number of co-operative banks and other central co-operative financing organisations should considerably be reconstituted. Whatever may be the form of the organisation, it is clear that our co operative movement would have to be strengthened and reorganised so as to save our agriculturist from the clutches of the unscrupulous money-lender and to provide him with a more satisfactory and adequate form of credit. Further, co-operative societies should be reformed and reorganised so as to serve as a centre for the general economic

improvement of its members. It is considered that it should develop into a multi-purpose society. It should not only finance crop production, but also act as an agent for the sale of crop; supply the farmers with seed, cattlefeed, fertilisers and agricultural implements; serve as a milk collecting station for the nearest dairy and as a centre for animal first-aid; serve as a centre for maintaining agricultural machinery for joint use of members; and encourage subsidiary occupations for its members. The Co-operative Planning Committee has suggested that a target should cover 50 per cent of the villages in British India and 30 per cent of the rural population within the ambit of the reorganised primary societies within a period of 10 years in two 5-year periods. The membership of a primary society should be at least 50. To reach the target it will be necessary to increase the number of members in the existing societies and to start new societies and it has been calculated that 1.7 million members should be added to the existing 97,357 societies and 21,600 new societies should be established annually for 10 years. It has further been recommended that the Government should give a subsidy amounting to 50 per cent of the cost of management to all societies—old and new—for the first five years.

10. We have met in this Conference to consider these and other recommendations of the Co-operative Planning Committee which are of a very far-reaching character and involve heavy cost. In doing so we shall have to bear in mind that co-operation is a provincial subject and the Government of India can only guide and suggest and offer such financial and technical assistance as it can afford; but the burden of giving effect to and implementing the recommendations will fall mainly on the provinces. It is possible that in the new set-up which will follow in train of the impending constitutional changes the scope of the functions of the Central Government may be still further circumscribed. Whatever the future may bring, we have to give our considered views on the recommendations and a detailed agenda has been prepared for the Conference.

11. I now indicate only some of the points of principle which should receive the careful attention of the Conference. Of there the first and foremost is the suggestion to increase and widen the scope of co-operative activities from being very largely credit

societies to multi-purpose societies. In this connection the question whether the liability of members should be limited or unlimited is one of fundamental significance. Another question of importance is whether co-operation can at all have recourse to compulsion in any form, and, if so, the extent to which it can go in that direction. Co-operation is based primarily on voluntary association and should not be departed from. But there may be certain activities essential for economic progress, like consolidation of holdings, crop production or irrigation in which the desired object may not be attained without resort to compulsion and the question arises as to what may be regarded as essential schemes and what should be the proportion of the community which through co-operative societies could make its decisions binding on others. A third fundamental point requiring consideration is the extent of Governmental control, interference and assistance in the affairs of co-operative societies. Apart from these and such other questions, there are other recommendations dealing with details relating to each particular kind of activity that co-operative societies may undertake. These relate to supply of agricultural credit, co-operative farming, milk production and supply, co-operative marketing of agricultural produce, small and subsidiary industries consumers, co-operatives, urban credit, co-operative housing societies—urban and rural; co-operative insurance including life insurance, fire insurance, cattle and crop insurance, general administration and training of workers, and propaganda, etc. I would invite the Conference to take up the consideration of these according to the agenda.

12. I am glad and grateful to have this opportunity of joining in your deliberations and hope the decision we shall be able to arrive at will result in expanding and strengthening the co-operative movement which holds out such a rich promise of progress for the great bulk of our vast population. We have to tackle the problem of the poverty of our masses and improvement of agriculture and animal husbandry and expansion and improvement of industries are essential for this purpose. We have to tackle the problem of illiteracy and insanitation and disease and in all these and many other spheres co-operation has a great part to play. The prospects are vast and varied and it requires a correspondingly increasing interest on the part of the people at large to be evinced and taken in the work. That depends upon the numbers of workers available

and even more upon the qualities of head and heart and the equipment of those who will choose this line of public service. It requires an even increasing number of enthusiastic public-spirited workers imbued fully with the spirit of co-operation and in the difficult and interesting times ahead let us hope we shall get them.

APPENDIX VII

Convocation Address Delevered by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Allahabad University on 12 December 1947

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Senators and graduates

The epoch in which you are stepping forward to bear the burden of your life is a sacred and glorious one. The century-old chains of slavery have been broken. The night of sorrow and suffering has come to an end. The age of frustration and humiliation is ending. The glorious sun of liberty is shining on the horizon giving new life and light to men and women, aged and children, rich and poor, of this ancient land. The spirit of India is rising again from its age long slumber, and a new life is pulsating in the body of the mother. Once again is beginning the epoch of new hopes and fresh aspirations, and once again joy and exhilaration is in the hearts of the people.

It is such a dawn of Hope that you are to take charge of your destiny. The burden of your responsibilities is great, and it has been made heavier by the freedom of your country. You have now to justify your capacity to be free in the eyes of the Maker and the world—a world that is neither narrow nor small, but which leaps over the narrow boundaries of your village and town province and country and is spread over the whole globe.

You need all the wisdom and courage to have a complete understanding of the nature of the modern world—an understanding without which you cannot take a single step towards the goal of self-fulfilment and success.

It is a world of multitudinous colours and shades. But there is neither time nor necessity to study all these facets. It appears to me, however, absolutely necessary to draw your attention on this occasion to certain fundamental aspects of the world you are about to enter.

The chief peculiarity of the modern world, a peculiarity to

which none can remain indifferent or blind, is the great mastery over nature which man possesses today. Man was a plaything of nature for ages. His helplessness and indigence in these epochs know to bounds. Life was a burden for him and the world a prison. It was but natural that the deepest wish of his life was to escape from this prison to a land where there was neither scarcity nor sickness, neither sorrow nor suffering. The ruling passion of his life was the attainment of his heaven. It is no doubt true that even then he knew that he had to suffer the agonies of death before he could enter this land of hopes, but the mere faith of reaching it sustained him in the struggles and sorrows of his life on earth. Today, however, this position exists no more. Now nature is the slave, instead of being the Lord, of man. He is today neither helpless nor feeble nor even without means. Science has given him the master-key that unlocks the doors of the most guarded treasure houses of nature, and the magic secret which secures him the arms and armour of gods.

The economic dreams embodied in the symbols of Kama Dhenu and Kalpa Taru are being made possible realisation in the day-to-day world by the discoveries of modern science. The mastery of the sea which the gods and the Asuras succeeded in achieving only once is how an ordinary fact of human life. The means of production and commerce which man possesses today are so many and so effective that no one in this vast world need remain without food, clothes and shelter. If these means were properly utilised it is certain that poverty would disappear for good from the world. The fact is that the heaven of human dreams has now come very near the frontiers of reality, and it is possible for every man to enjoy the pleasures of paradise on this earth and in his earthly existence.

Another peculiarity of the modern world is the essential unity of all nations of the world. The highest ideal of ancient ages was that the individual must treat himself as a citizen of the world with as great obligations to all men as he had towards the members of his family. But in the modern world the acceptance of this ideal has become the first duty of the civilised man—a duty which he must accept if the modern world is to survive. This has become unavoidable and invitable on account of the conquest of Distance which science has made possible for man. The Chinese wall of distance which divided man from man, country from country and

nation from nation exists no more. The annihilation of distance has been so great that today the different nations constitute but sections of one indivisible humanity, and the different countries but the several wards of the Great City—the one world. The peace and prosperity, the culture and civilisation, the health and the wealth, the happiness and joy of this great city are indivisible and integral. Each part of this great city depends for its life and living on the other parts. In other words the world is one, and its peace and prosperity are one and indivisible.

The third great fact of the modern world is the conquest of Time which man has achieved. One year of his life is equal to ten of his ancestors in point of achievement. He covers distances and complates assignments with a speed greater than that of the storm itself.

But what a cruel irony of fate it is that man with all this power of gods, has neither serenity of spirit nor security of his life. It appears as if this very power has become his great enemy and destroyer. Today we find all the symptoms of this destruction —the struggle and strife, scarcity and starvation, homelessness and epidemic. Today in Europe and Asia like there are millions upon millions of men and women who do not get a square meal to satisfy their hunger and not a strip of cloth to cover their nakedness. There are many others who have only the stones for their pillows and the streets for their beds. Alas ! such is also the case with many people in our country as well. It is no doubt true that we are free today but we neither have prosperity nor security. It is our great misfortune that our country has been divided, and it has been our sorrow to see the uprooting, with cruel and savage hands of millions of human beings from the land of their ancestors. Cruelty and barbarism have had an awful dance in one part of the country and in another, the Indian Paradise, even today savage events are taking place.

The query rises in the mind why all this exists. What far people take to loot and exploitation when everyone has plenty and are to live in comfort and luxury ? Why is it that there is enmity between individuals, nations and states ? It is because man is mad ? Is it because the lacks, like the wild animals of the forest, the sense to distinguish between good and bad ? But it cannot be so. Man is neither mad nor senseless. The question remains—why, then, all this meaningless struggle and strife ? This

is the great question of the modern world—the question which demands a solution from each one of you, I believe that this struggle arises because man has forgotten his soul in the struggle to conquer nature has thrown morality overhead in the striving to a mass wealth, and has banished love and sympathy in the effort to acquire power.

I admit that conquest of nature is not an evil in itself. On the contrary, the truth is that man is unable to respond to the call of the spirit in the absence of mastery over nature. But when the struggle to master nature become the sole occupation of man's life it is then that it becomes a limitless evil. Knowledge is for life, not life for knowledge. In other words, knowledge is a mere instrument which is of use to the spirit in the striving for self-realisation. In the language of the mundane world we can say that knowledge is the instrument with which life can be made full of truth, beauty and good. But if knowledge become itself the goal, it leads to death and darkness. It was this truth which was proclaimed by the *Ishopanished* which says that mere ignorance and mere knowledge take man to a land of utter, impenetrable and blinding darkness. It proclaims the great truth that spiritual vision alone can lead to true salvation.

Even a single glance at the condition in which the world finds itself today proves conclusively the truth of this statement. Science has divorced itself today from morality. The sole occupation of the scientist is the study of the underlying relations of the different objects and aspects of nature. The man of science does not concern himself with the question whether his discoveries are being put to a good or an evil use. The consequence of this view of his mission is that the scientist is ready to sell his talents for a few coins of gold and silver without pausing for a moment to consider the consequences, good or evil, that such a course involves . . . The results of this amoral attitude of science are staring you in the face. Today the discoveries of science are being utilised by honest people and criminal alike for the promotion of their interests and the attainment of their ends—and what is more reprehensible is that the thugs, the criminals, the unscrupulous are making more gains by the use of science than the others. The greatest triumph of modern science, the atom bomb, will always be associated in the minds of men with the dying wall of the thousands of innocent men and women whose life was suddenly

brought to an end by its first effective use in the world. Today there is not a single spot in the world which has not witnessed the cruel destruction of human life and the degaradation of the human spirit by the arms and the instruments given to man by modern science. There is no sphere of life in which the spirit of man has not been crucified with the aid of these instruments. Man is exploiting and crucifying man with the machies and arms that science has invented. The truth is that this moral knowledge has taken man to the land of darkness in which he cannot even see his own stretched hand. Had not the pride of scientific achievemets blinded man and nations, could it have been possible that every nation, knowing full well the destructive potentialities of the atom bomb, would still have continued to spend billions on the manufacture of these bombs—and this when millions are facing the slow agony of starvation ?

The sages of our land had for this very reason emphatically declared that self-conquest is the supreme triumph of man. More than two thousand years ago it was again in our country that the great Emperor Asoka renounced all conquest except the Dhamma Vijaya. Mahatma Gandhi has been giving again this ancient message to the people of India and the world. It may have been thas we whose eyes have been dazzled by the glitter of the modern civilisation may have failed to perceive the glory of Dhamma Vijaya (the triumph of moral law). Again it may well have been that our ears, deafened as they probably are by the maddening noise of the modern machines, may have not responded to the music of moral law. But the truth remains that the peoples of the world, as our own people, have to dedicate themselves to the achievement of the total victory of moral law in human life. Man must do this and that also very soon, for if he does not wake up in time disaster and death will overtake him. But I have faith in the human spirit and I believe that he will yet realise the tragic potentialities of the amoral civilisation of modern time.

The struggle against and triumph over the inanimate and heartless nature makes man also unresponsive to the eternal verities. It is thus but inevitable that in that civilisation there be no place for catholicity and humanity. Man can exist in it only as a cog in a vast machine. Machine, far from being the instrument of man, becomes his sovereign master. You will find this truth by surveying the great nations which are the best representatives of the civilisation. You may search, but you will

search in vain, to find a single institution in those countries which has been created purely out of a spirit of humanity, of abiding love of service. There suspician reigns—the suspicion of man, the suspicion of nations. Every institution is dominated by either a political or an economic dictatorship.

But such a dominant position was never given to the material world by our civilisation. It recognised the importance of the world, but only as a meant for the self-realisation of the human spirit. It never accepted that the spirit of man was an insignificant element of nature or that the spirit was the slave of environment. It was the recognition of the primacy of the human spirit that made the Hindu treat the master of kingdoms as inferior to the conqueror of the self. To the Hindu, the moral law was far above the law of the state.

The world stands in need of the re-adoption of this faith in the supremacy of the moral law above all the rules of commerce and states. It must take to the path of self-conquest.

A glance at the importance of the economic prosperity and organisation in the life of man would also help in the proper appreciation of the significance of this principle of self-conquest. Many people in modern science believe that all human relations are but a reflection of the economic structure and relations of men in any historic epoch. No one can deny the importance of bread and butter, clothing and housing in the life of the individuals and the groups. But it does not appear to be true that economic considerations play the dominant role in determining human relations. It appears to me that this view is based on the negation of human spirit. It may have possessed some truth if man had been, like the beasts of the forest, a mere animal driven by instincts and possessing man-power to choose his course of action. But man is not a beast. He differs from it in possessing two quailties—one, the creative impulse, and the other, the nation of morality. It is evident from human activities that man is not satisfied by what is given to him by nature. He seeks to reshape and recreate nature in order to make a world which satisfies his spiritual craving. In other words he seeks to remodel the world so as to make it true, beautiful, and good. It is this creative urge that takes him out of himself to weave his life and mind with those of the others. The great secret is rooted in the creative

impulse and moral law, which rule the life of the individual. He would have had no urge to weave himself with others in the absence of the former, and his social bond would but prove chains of sand in the absence of the latter. It is, therefore, clear that the foundations of human societies are moral and aesthetic rather than economic in character. Economic efforts and acquisition are but the means through which the basic impulses of the human spirit find realisation, but they do not constitute the end of life itself. The world is facing a great disaster because it has fergotten this great truth. It is a tragedy that man worships mammon today as the presiding deity of his life. The consequence of this mammon worship is that man has been degraded into a commodity capable of sale and purchase. Such has been the degradation of the human spirit that while one class of men seeks to purchase others to labour for itself, another class of men seeks violently to expropriate the former and establish its dictatorship.

The same mad lust for power is to be found in the political sphere. People seek power for its own sake and not for the realisation of their Atman. Power is a means of life, not its end. But when it is accepted as an end itself then man may become a successful tiger but he can never attain the status of a true man. We are witnessing in our unhappy country the disastrous consequences of this lust for power. Hundreds of thousands of men and women have been uprooted from their ancestral homes. Men have reached the lowest depths of animality. It is this lust for power that keeps the nations enemies of one another. No state can tolerate being less powerful than any other and race for power, therefore, goes on. But this involves the degradation of the human spirit and the destruction of human values. If you turn the pages of recent history you will find written on each page the worship of power and the faith in the atom bomb and the big navy.

This is the picture of the world you are about to enter. You are educated and full of youth and enthusiasm. It is your paramount duty to bring back man from this path of destruction and to make him tread the path of fulfilment. This path lies in the revival of the ancient culture of India. It is a path of self-conquest, of service, and of renunciation. What is this conquest of self that I am asking you to undertake ? I am not going to propound to you any abstruse philosophical proposition. I shall consider briefly the social aspects of this problem I have already

stated that two special attributes distinguish man from the rest of the animals. These are, one, the creative urge and second, the moral will. Man has become the crown of creation on account of these attributes. It is in the complete fulfilment of these attributes that I consider the victory of the human spirit lies. If the nature of the creative urge is analysed it would be found that it takes man away from ugliness, disharmony, cruetly and hardness of heart. The tenderness and the sympathy of the artist vibrate in its bosom. It is, thus, rooted in the great principle of Ahimsa, the principle which unites all beings into a cosmic whole. The moral will again is an aspect of Ahimsa. Ahimsa does not mean merely non-destruction or non-killing of life. Ahimsa signifies the ideal of accepting or doing nothing but what promotes the realisation of the good. the beautiful, and the truth. The *Ishopanishad* describes this truth by saying that all that is in the universe is of God and one must enjoy only what one is given (for the realisation of the self) without casting envious eyes on what others have. This, in my opinion gives a good idea of what Ahimsa is. Man has to accept what the Lord offers him not as a means for gratification but for self-realisation. He must not look beyond the performance of his duty nor must he desire anything more than what is absolutely nccessary for his performance. He must not grumble about the superior means, if any, which others may be enjoying. Each one must dedicate himself to the duty of making the life of every individual human being true, good and beautiful. The path of self conquest (Atma Vijaya) is thus one of service and sacrifice, of co-operation and creation. There is not the least place in it for national, racial, and individual jealousies and bitternesses. Gandhiji has adopted this path of moral conquest in the political sphere; and he has extended a free and open invitation to every individual and nation to adopt this path.

Often people think that it is only the Mahatmas who can dare to tread this path. But this belief is based on the erroneous idea that one requires superhuman power and divine qualities to tread on it. The fact, however, is that everyone can tread this path. The learned and the rustic, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the aged and the young, men and women—anyone of them with the heart of man can travel on it. What is required is only faith.

When man forgets his true self, when he begins to attach greater importance to external trappings than to his inner self,

when he forgets the difference between himself and the beast, it is then that this path appears to him to be leading to wilderness. Such an opinion about the futility of this path is now being expressed in the India of today. It is now said that path suggested by Gandhiji has no use under the present conditions. It is asserted that the sword alone can solve the problems of present-day India. But I submit that this is a profound error—an error which shall lead us to the land which the *Upanishad* says is covered with blinding darkness. This is not a mere flight of imagination but the truth and nothing but the truth.

Do not forget that the roots of whatever power and beauty there is in human life consist of the creative urge and the moral will, that is, of Ahimsa. Remember that the tiger has remained behind man in the evolution of life, notwithstanding its sharper claws and greater physical strength than those of man, simply because it lacked the moral and creative activities of man. It, no doubt, does happen sometimes that tiger triumphs over man, but in the history of life tiger is an insignificant creature in comparison to man.

Similarly it is possible that the tyrant who puts his faith in the sword may sometimes succeed in massacring those who believe in Ahimsa; but in the end the victory shall be of non-violence for it is but another name of humanity. Remember also that even the sword gains its effectiveness from the co-operation of man, and this, in its turn, is rooted in the great urge and the moral will of man. The foundation of society and of state is, thus, Ahimsa and only Ahimsa—and not the sword and the gun. If, therefore, the state and the society are to be kept in existence it is essential to embrace and follow the principle of Ahimsa. It was the realisation of this truth that led Asoka to engrave on rocks that moral conquest was the only lasting and true conquest.

The modern notion of citizenship also points towards the same truth. It is said today that the world is in turmoil because the people are not living up to the principles of citizenship. The principle of citizenship demands that every citizen must fulfil his duties without worry about his rights as these will automatically flow from the performance of duties. It is the primary duty of the citizen to serve and support the state by every possible means. He must obey the laws, honestly pay the taxes, that part in essential services, scrupulously use the powers of his office within their due

limits, and be ready to contribute his life, money, and judgment to the service of the nation at times of emergency. These duties of citizenship flows from the faith that each individual has the moral claim to his fulfilment with the help of the state. In other words, the principle of citizenship is rooted in the moral will of man. But this principle of citizenship is much narrower in its application than that of Ahimsa. It seeks to confine the moral will within the narrow limits of the territorial state. It seeks to create the feeling of brotherhood among the nationals of a state but keeps wide the psychological gulf betwcen the nationals of one state and those of the others. This psychological gulf proves a barrier in the world of today, as it always did in the world of by-gone days, to the ascent of man to his rightful more throne. It makes man half-man and half-tiger. This man-tiger often reveals that the tiger in it is more powerful than the man. Man will be truly human, the truth shall triumph in the world, and peace and prosperity shall reign there only when man puts faith in himself and fulfils his mission of creation.

The battle scarred world calls you—you, who have been given the vision of truth and humility by this great university to enter the moral struggle for bringing man to the path of immorality. Your youth, your education, your ideals shall have fulfilment only when you respond to this call. Your country calls you to revive the ancient culture—the culture which accepted as its heroes Dadhichi, Harishchandra, Ram and Bharat. Your countrymen expect you to crown your toils by taking the life-giving Ganges of Ahimsa to the thirsty soil of their hearts. Your past, your present, your future, all challenge you to go forward on the straight and wide highway of Dharma. Step forward, for in this journey lies the fulfilment of your life and the glory of your spirit.

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